

# Can Film Critics Be Bought?

(MORE)

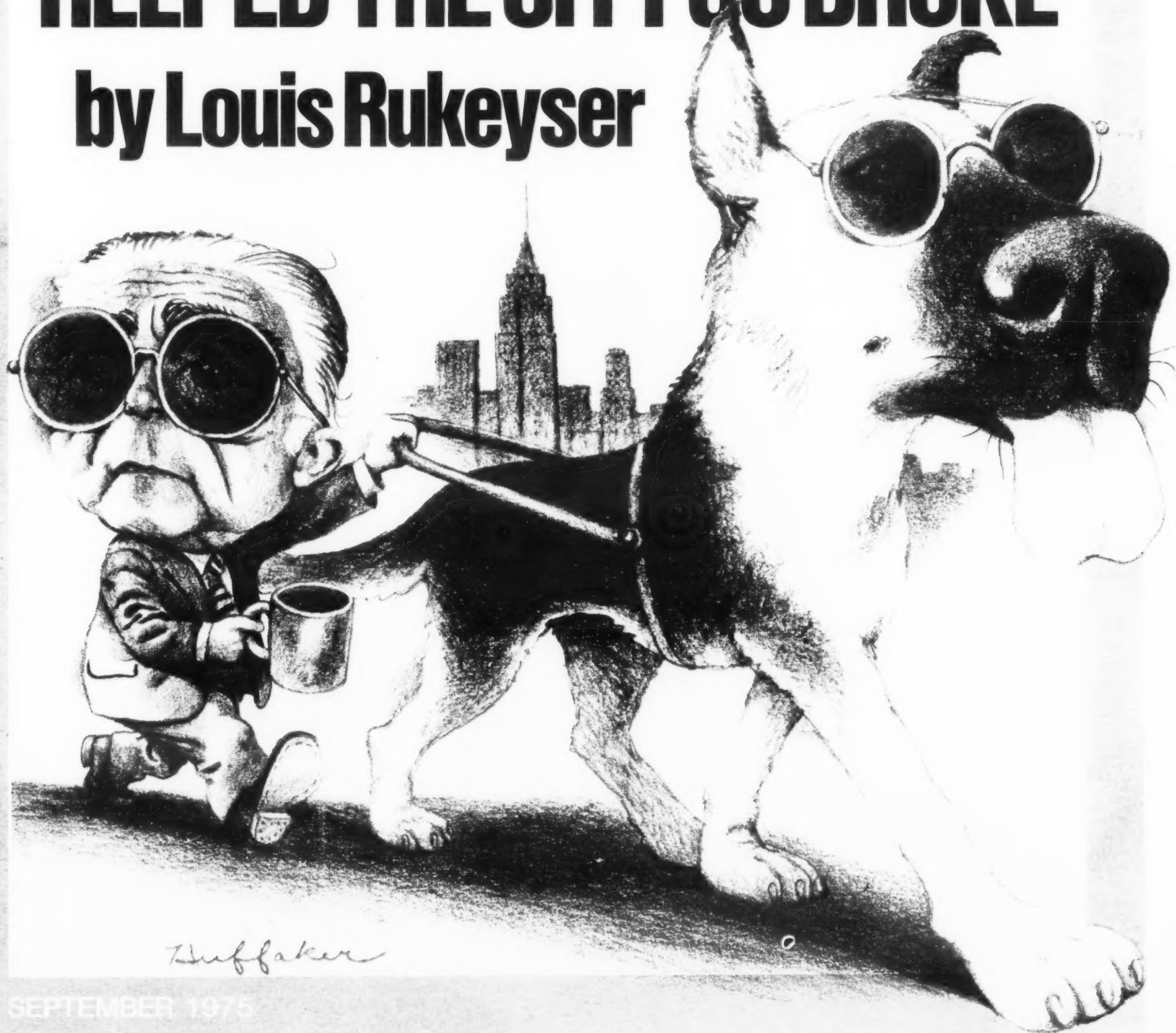
Hearst Defends A  
Bizarre Legal Case

Gushing Over Ford

J. Anthony Lukas on  
India's Censored Press

## HOW NEW YORK'S DAILIES HELPED THE CITY GO BROKE

by Louis Rukeyser



SEPTEMBER 1975

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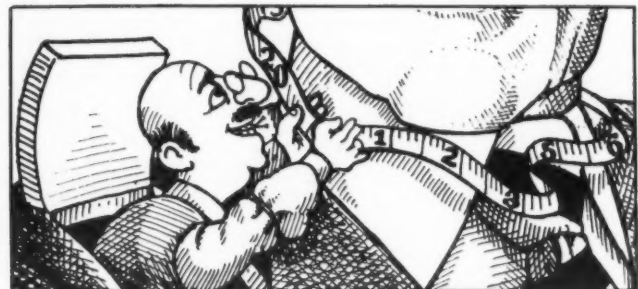
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New York's financial crisis gave the city's editorialists their chance to be wise. Instead, they mostly added to the general confusion. Only one newspaper, says the author, recognized the simple truth behind the city's ills.

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Congressmen don't like to talk about it. And the taxpayers don't hear much about it. But two of the busiest television studios in the country can be found hidden away in the House and Senate.

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Cover drawing by Sandy Huffaker

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SEPTEMBER 1975

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# COLUMN TWO

## An Old and Seamy Story

BY J. ANTHONY LUKAS

Exactly ten years ago—as *The New York Times* correspondent in India—I made a reporting trip to the Vale of Kashmir. That exquisite valley was once again roiled by rioting; Indian troops had cracked some heads and clapped a few more political prisoners in jail. I filed a "wrap-up" and went back to New Delhi. A few days later, when the newspaper arrived from New York, I found my story had been drastically altered. These were not the ordinary copy-desk butcheries. This time, facts had been changed, particularly statistics on the number of prisoners in Kashmiri jails. Outraged, I fired off a cable to the foreign desk in New York: What the hell was going on? And the foreign editor fired back: Cool down. We didn't change your bloody facts. That's the way we got them.

Obviously, my problems were in Kashmir, not New York. After weeks of inquiry, the Ministry of Telecommunications conceded that the story had been "censored." I protested to the Ministry of External Affairs and one day I was received by a flustered official. "Mr. Lukas," he told me, "this is a genuinely distressing occurrence. As you know, we have a free press in India. Kashmir, of course, is a somewhat special case. Pakistan has attacked there many times. Pakistani spies are everywhere. It is an embattled zone, and we have to be very careful. Evidently, some overzealous official . . ."

Having just arrived in India, I was naturally skeptical of the official's disclaimers. But during the two years to come, I found that his claims were largely justified. India *did* have a free press, and a foreign correspondent there enjoyed a degree of access to government officials and private citizens which astonished cynical newsmen who had served elsewhere in the Third World.

The openness of Indians from all ranks and stations never ceased to astonish me. I would pull up in my battered Chevrolet at the doorstep of a District Collector in some provincial city. Invariably, the official—who might never have heard of *The New York Times*—would receive me with elaborate courtesy and a cup of milky tea. What could he do for me? Well, I'd heard about crop failures, or famine, or small-pox or bandits in his district. Would he show me? Why, of course, he would be delighted. So we would hop in his jeep and speed off through the parched fields to examine whatever shortcoming I had chosen to write about that day.

But now that has ended. All India has become Kashmir. Under Mrs. Gandhi's stern hand, the subcontinent from Srinagar to Trivandrum is one vast "embattled zone." The justification is no longer Pakistani aggression but "domestic subversion." Yet the effect is the same: freedom of the press, and most other freedoms, no longer exist. The government has issued strict new "guidelines" governing both domestic reporting and foreign correspondents. These guidelines prevent newsmen from reporting speeches by opposition leaders, details of popular protest or anything else that might sap public confidence in the government. Foreign correspondents have been required to sign pledges that they will accept "responsibility" for their dispatches in accordance with these guidelines, and several correspondents who have refused

to sign such pledges have been expelled from the country.

To Americans who know and love India, this has been a sad time. When we meet these days, we shake our heads, reminisce over the good old days, and offer melancholy prognostications. But all this may be a shade too easy. Americans have long had a tendency to romanticize India. Tutored by such incurable romantics as Chester Bowles and Norman Cousins, we have conjured up a never-never land of learned philosophers, virtuous ascetics, non-violent conciliators, self-governing villagers and Asian democrats struggling to preserve a "viable alternative" to Chinese Communism. India was probably never as "democratic" as we, in our hazy dreams, imagined her.

Moreover, the free press which foreign correspondents, Ford Foundation officials and A.I.D. bureaucrats loved to talk about was really far more important to us than it was to most Indians. If India's press was uninhibited, it was not always very skillful; if it was lively, it was also incurably lazy; if it was critical, it generally valued commentary far more than reporting. Whether written in English—or in one of the indigenous tongues (Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, etc.)—it was directed at a relatively small middle class. The vast majority of Indians—living at subsistence level in thousands of tiny villages—knew nothing of, and cared nothing for, press freedom.

It is, of course, from these masses that Indira Gandhi has always drawn her most passionate support and it is to them that she is pitching her appeal. In a series of ringing addresses, she has proclaimed her determination to impose sweeping economic reforms which will better the lives of ordinary Indians; and no political forms or constitutional guarantees can be permitted to stand in the way. "In India," she said recently, "democracy has given too much license to people. Whether it were newspapers or opposition, they were trying to misuse it and weakening the nation's confidence."

**W**e have heard this sort of language before—from a succession of petty autocrats in Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma, Afghanistan, Thailand, Korea, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Greece, Paraguay, Argentina and a score of other lands. Indeed, the last few months have served to destroy that sense of Indian uniqueness—the peculiar tradition which began with Mahatma Gandhi, reached its special flowering under Jawaharlal Nehru and was to have been nourished by his daughter, Indira. Perhaps what we have been learning since June is that Indian democracy was merely a temporary aberration, a brave but doomed experiment.

Where else, between the Rhine and the Rockies, can one find true freedom of the press? Japan, perhaps, but Japan is increasingly a western society far closer to Belgium or Canada than to Malaysia or Ecuador. Perhaps press freedom as we know it simply cannot survive in a country where the vast majority of the population lives in abject poverty.

But it is one thing to suggest that widespread misery and parliamentary niceties co-exist with difficulty; quite another to say that



the contraction of freedom will improve the people's lot. One might be willing to see India's newspapers restricted for a time if that would help feed, clothe and educate millions of Indians who now live in utter destitution. But I, for one, harbor no such hopes.

It must be noted that Mrs. Gandhi embarked on her present course only after the courts threatened her own position. The poverty and economic injustices about which she now declaims so passionately existed long before she entered office nine years ago. Yet she has waited until now to impose her "new discipline." She found the press inconvenient, not because it weakened confidence in India, but because it weakened confidence in Indira. An old and seamy story. ■

## LETTERS

### Illusions?

In your article "Nothing Succeeds Like Failure" [June 1975], it is obvious that David Rubin went to the task of writing with definite convictions that he intended to prove. He adhered to his plan so blindly that he went wrong factually (i.e., his reference to the *Times's* controlling the expenditures of the *News* for its editorial operations), he went wrong in his conclusions (i.e., his opinion that separation of the newsrooms was an "illusion") and his understanding of what he read in the documents was deficient.

—Robert B. Atwood  
Editor and Publisher  
*Anchorage Daily Times*  
Anchorage, Alaska

David Rubin replies: Mr. Atwood is conveniently ignoring some specific provisions of the joint operating agreement which binds his paper and the *Anchorage Daily News*. The *Times* has dictated a fixed amount that the *News* may deduct as a yearly operating expense for its news and editorial operation. In addition, the *Times* will share generously in any future profits of the *News* and will therefore benefit from any cost efficiencies that can be imposed. Separate newsrooms and editorial staffs hardly guarantee editorial separation. Budgets and the profit motive, it seems to me, are the clearest types of control. To dispel this "illusion" of editorial separation and make it fact, it would be interesting to hear from Mr. Atwood what economic steps he is taking to guarantee it. After lengthy study of media monopoly in the United States, I think I am entitled to some "convictions"—all of which are supported in the piece itself.

### Ms.-understanding

Deanne Stillman's article, "Of Stocks and Redstockings" [August 1975], incorrectly states that I resigned from *Ms.* because of the editors' reply to the Redstockings' charges. At the time of the Redstockings' press conference I had already made a considered decision to leave because of longstanding political and editorial disagreements and was thinking about when and how to communicate that decision to the *Ms.* staff. The Redstockings' statement and *Ms.* response did create a crisis that cut short my deliberations, but my departure was in no way an impulsive reaction to those events. I feel that the distinction is an important one, and would appreciate [MORE]'s publishing this clarification.

—Ellen Willis  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

# ROSEBUDS

## Strange Bedfellows

### THE VIETNAM VETERAN



VETS IN PRISON

**R**OSEBUDS to *Penthouse* magazine for finding space alongside the glossy girls and titillating tales ("Confessions of a teenage sperm donor," "Tumescent taxi—sex in the back seat") for a hard-hitting, continuing series of exposés on the plight of the Vietnam war veteran. From the March 1974 issue "until forever, if need be, until we get results," according to editor and publisher Bob Guccione, *Penthouse* has been hammering away at the bane of the Vietnam vet's life—a sluggish Veterans Administration, a persecuting Pentagon, an outdated GI Bill, indifferent employers and drugs.

*Penthouse* is much more famous for its bold exposés of the female anatomy (approximately 30 pages per issue), and its investigative writing has largely been focused on the tribal sexual habits of the now generation. Although the magazine is well-read by servicemen, Guccione is quick to stress that the veterans' series "is hardly a circulation booster" among his legions of horny young readers. Then why launch a crusading campaign about a subject that most of the media long ago chose to forget?

As Guccione tells it, late in 1973 a writer friend acquainted him with the difficulties Vietnam vets were facing. "I couldn't believe so much was happening to them, and yet so much was not happening for them. It was one big mess, but no one wanted to take the vet's part."

Two factors helped him decide to start the series. One was "we were getting bigger as a magazine, selling as many copies as *Playboy*. But were we doing anything serious? When you begin to feel how big your voice is becoming, when you see how many people you are reaching, you start feeling responsible. This was a way to show the serious side of the magazine," said Guccione, who confesses to a vaguely populist political viewpoint. The other factor was somewhat sentimental. "Vietnam was the first testing ground for *Penthouse* with an American readership," Guccione said. "We sold *Penthouse*—then only a British version—over there in 1967 and 1968 to see how it would catch on. The GIs preferred it to *Playboy*. Vietnam was the first indication that we could succeed in the United States," Guccione asserted.

The concept of the project was to examine every detail of the Vietnam veterans' situation, and the 18 articles printed through August 1975 have indeed covered the spectrum. Most have been of high quality. Less successful have been the occasional fiction installments, mostly focusing on the problems of readjusting to life in the United States. Guccione says fiction is used when incidents cannot be properly documented. But the form seems an inappropriate—and occasionally tasteless—way of dealing with the story.



Guccione: 'Showing a serious side.'

The coverlines on a fictional account of sex in the war read, "Viet Prostitute Training School: Wham, Bang."

But generally, the series has maintained a serious tone and copies of the articles are mailed to congressmen, government officials and military men. The magazine set up an office in Washington, D.C., headed by Vietnam war critic William Corson, a former U.S. Marine colonel who runs a veterans' advisory page in the magazine and personally assists GIs who are helplessly entangled in red tape.

What has the campaign achieved so far? The most immediate impact came from an August 1974 article by Michael Pousner, who revealed that the Separation Program Numbers (SPNs) printed on a GI's discharge papers could brand him for life. *Penthouse* printed a full list of the 96 code numbers and the categories of undesirable conduct they indicated, and magazine editors say the SPNs are no longer used.

In an effort to reform the Veterans Administration, *Penthouse* enlisted the help of journalist Sarah McClendon, who toured the country pushing the *Penthouse* campaign. As a result of those proddings, regional upgrading centers—rather than just a central one in Washington, D.C.—may soon be introduced to help veterans remove the stigma of the "less than honorable" discharges handed out by the thousands after Vietnam.

The biggest *Penthouse* project, however, will be launched at the beginning of 1976 to introduce a new GI Bill "that will better serve the needs of veterans," Guccione said. Writer Tim O'Brien, in an article on the present GI Bill in November 1974, said that "it discriminates against the poor, minority and educationally disadvantaged veterans—those who bore the brunt of the draft." *Penthouse* will lobby to have the bill introduced, and intends to poll congressmen and senators and print a "good guy—bad guy list" to record their reactions to the new bill.

When the United States first pulled out of Vietnam, the returning servicemen provided some good copy and film reports. But the veteran soon became a casualty of an unpopular war. Americans, wanting to forget the Vietnam experience, preferred also to forget the veteran. Like Indochina, the veteran disappeared from the media. But his problems did not disappear. The business of magazines like *Playboy* and *Penthouse* is selling skin, and the serious articles may be merely window-dressing. But *Penthouse* is still the only place where the problems of the veterans are being explored on a regular basis.

*Penthouse* is currently running another series, a 12-parter on the CIA featuring such writers as Harrison Salisbury and Tad Szulc. But lest the loyal public hair fan become alarmed, Guccione doesn't intend to tip the balance of his magazine too far in favor of serious writings. "We have to have a laugh, too, don't we?" he said, lolling back in a fair copy of a Louis XIV chair and fondling the gold pendants hanging from three chains around his neck. "I personally photographed some girls for October that will blow your mind. We're aggressive and upbeat. That applies to our girl pictures, too."

—PETER ARNETT

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# HELLBOX



Marc Nadel



Nadel

## New Model Ford

In preparation for the 1976 campaign, Carl Leubsdorf, chief political writer for the Associated Press, joined the reporters covering President Ford's Midwest barnstorming in July. When he returned to Washington Sunday, July 13, Leubsdorf wrote a news analysis of the trip which moved on the wire shortly after midnight. His lead read:

"President Ford's hectic 'non-political' three-day weekend in Michigan and Illinois enabled him to show the strengths he will carry into the 1976 presidential campaign. It also showed some weaknesses."

On the plus side, Leubsdorf listed Ford's "warm and open personality" and "friendly sometimes enthusiastic receptions." On the minus side were the President's "somewhat simplistic optimism" and "generally lackluster speaking style."

Several hours later, after editors in New York and Washington had arrived at work, an advisory was sent out on the story: "The following deletes what might be construed as editorialized comment." The new lead read:

"President Ford's hectic 'nonpolitical' three-day weekend in Michigan and Illinois enabled him to show the strengths he will carry into the 1976 presidential campaign."

Any mention of weakness was omitted.

Bob Johnson, AP's managing editor, said the story was edited because Leubsdorf did not support his criticisms. "This was a news analysis, not an editorial," Johnson told [MORE]. "If you say the President is simplistic and lackluster, you have to back it up. There wasn't a single example in the story of 'simplistic optimism,' whatever that means." Leubsdorf had reported that Ford said anticipated grain sales to Russia would not affect domestic food prices and that the oil industry was doing "everything possible under the law" to increase domestic oil production. Asked by a reporter in Chicago about the failings of his administration, Ford had responded, "I don't think there have been many."

The decision to change the lead was made simultaneously by Lou

Boccardi, AP's vice-president and executive editor in New York, and Marv Arrowsmith and Burl Osborne, chief and assistant chief of the bureau in Washington, according to managing editor Johnson, although no one consulted Leubsdorf on the change. "It's not necessary for the editor to consult the writer if time is of the essence," Johnson said.

Leubsdorf, who was home in Maryland when the deletions were made, strongly disapproved. "I'm sure something mutually agreeable could have been worked out if they'd consulted me first," he told [MORE]. "But if I had known they were going to run the story the way they did, I would have insisted my byline be taken off."

A few weeks before the Leubsdorf incident, Wes Gallagher, AP president and general manager, issued a four-page memo on company policy, which he asked all staff members to sign and return. Stressing the need for objectivity and impartiality, the memo read in part, "There is no room in AP for . . . ideological bias in any direction in our copy." Johnson admitted that Leubsdorf's original story may have been an acceptable news analysis for a newspaper or magazine, "but not for the Associated Press."

—AMANDA HARRIS

## Cold War and Peace

Apollo and Soyuz rendezvous in space, President Ford refuses to greet Solzhenitsyn and the great Bolshoi Opera and Ballet companies tour these United States. Even if it is occasionally artificial, Soviet-American détente is proceeding. Recently, attempts to preserve it have involved censorship in the cultural area.

At the June 17 performance of the Bolshoi Ballet in Los Angeles, the audience in Shrine Auditorium found the last two pages of their programs ripped out. The pages had contained three advertisements. One ad announced the appearance of Soviet emigrants Valery and Galina Panov in the San Francisco ballet as part of a Los Angeles Parks De-

partment summer program. Another ad, placed by the Southern California Council for Soviet Jews, promoted Solzhenitsyn's book *Gulag Archipelago*. The third, a full page ad, signed by the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles, proclaimed, "Welcome to the Bolshoi Ballet" and added in smaller print, "But That's About All." The ad hailed cultural exchange, detente and peace, but decried repression of culture and freedom in the Soviet Union.

Betty Farrel, publicity agent for Variety Concerts, which produces most Shrine events, told [MORE] that "Hurok had ordered [the deletions]." The S. Hurok organization produces the Bolshoi tour. Lilian Libman, Hurok's national tour director, reiterated her statement to the Los Angeles media at the time of the June incident. As quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*, Libman claimed that "no censorship was involved since the program is a free house organ. The Bolshoi would not interfere with anyone's right to protest or express themselves outside the limits of what is a private enterprise [Hurok and the Shrine Auditorium] presenting

**שלום**  
**Welcome to the Bolshoi Ballet**

But That's About All

The Bolshoi Ballet is welcome. Cultural exchange is welcome. Detente. Peace. Progress. All are welcome. However, we must not forget the beauty of the ballet with the exception of culture and freedom. Both are products of the U.S.S.R. Soviet Jewry, after all, is the right to integrate. Jewish immigrants, their religious, in such their cultural and political language. In recent months, their situation has worsened. Immigration from the U.S.S.R. has been severely restricted. Some are given hard sentences after being tried.

Ad removed from Bolshoi program.

the dancers as performers and artists." But Libman added that the Bolshoi—and she as its press representative—had a right to demand removal of "offensive material from the free in-house program." Libman said the dancers considered the ads "an offense against guests of the United States government." She said that any further "insults" would cause the Russians to cancel the tour.

The Jewish Federation Council is contemplating a lawsuit against Hurok and the Bolshoi for allegedly violating the organization's First Amendment right to freedom of the press. Charles Posner, head of the Council, notes that a similar full-page ad was run without any opposition in a program for the "Stars of the Bolshoi" performance last summer in L.A. That tour was not sponsored by Hurok.

The desire not to ruffle Soviet feathers was also exhibited in New

York City where the Bolshoi Opera appeared from June 22 to July 19. The Conference on Soviet Jewry proposed an ad to STAGEBILL, the Lincoln Center program publication, which contained a political message like that of the Jewish Federation Council in Los Angeles. The ad was not accepted. Next, the Council submitted a blank page signed by the organization. That ad did not run either. Joseph P. Barbieri, publisher of STAGEBILL, claimed the copy for the second ad was late but admitted that he would not have accepted the copy even if it had been on time. "Art is the best field of communication we have and it should not be violated by politics," Barbieri said. "Our editorial pages are devoted purely to the performing arts. We should not take up the cudgels. We just want fine writers on dance, music and theater."

After Barbieri rejected the ad, Malcolm Hoenlein, director of the Conference on Soviet Jewry, thought the incident might interest the New York media. A press release was supposedly sent to all three papers, but nothing ever appeared in their news columns. The *Times*, however, published a letter from soprano Beverly Sills and pianist David Bar-Illan. Commenting on the mixed blessings of detente, Sills and Bar-Illan said "Instead of promoting contact and liberalization, it has made us acquiesce to censorship."

—NICHOLAS STEPHENS

## I'll Drink to That

The television code of the National Association of Broadcasters says liquor should be used on programs only if it is essential to the plot or character development and should be de-emphasized at all other times.

Still, liquor flows more freely on prime-time television than any other beverage, including coffee and water, according to a recent survey in the *Christian Science Monitor*. The shows with the most drinking—where liquor flowed an average of once every eight minutes—were *Guns, Smoke and M.A.S.H.* The top ten also included *Mannix*, *Cannon*, *The Jeffersons*, *Police Story*, *Petrocelli*, *NBC Saturday Night at the Movies*, *Harry O* and *Tuesday Movie of the Week*.

Both NBC and CBS say they abide by the NAB liquor rule. Richard P. Gitter, ABC's director, department of broadcast standards and practices (East Coast), says scripts are regularly edited by the network to remove unnecessary drinking. But the producers of eight of ABC's soap operas and those prime-time shows cited by the *Monitor* say they have never had any scripts returned with orders to reduce drinking. And Larry Gelbart, executive producer of CBS's top-drinking *M.A.S.H.*, says his programs were never edited for use of too much liquor.

John Mantley, former executive producer of *Guns, Smoke*, says that



# HELLBOX



"Who do you think you're calling a lush?"

Bettmann Archive

during the eleven years he produced the show, scripts were "infrequently" brought back for excessive drinking. Says Richard Kirschner, CBS vice-president of program practices in Hollywood: "We send out more notes concerning sex and violence than drinking."

As a result, Gelbart says he will have to be particularly careful with scripts next season when *M.A.S.H.* shifts its emphasis from the drinking aspect of Army life to the area of "casual sex with the nurses."

—ROBERT FISHER

## Energy Pitch

The people who gave us the slogan "Don't Be Fuelish" may have run their last mile for the Federal Energy Administration. The FEA in June publicly broke with the Advertising Council and its agency, Cunningham & Walsh, when the two organizations refused to endorse ads stressing the nation's vulnerability to foreign oil.

The Ad Council, a nonprofit corporation funded by private business (including the advertising and communications industries) places about 40 per cent of public service spots on the networks. The FEA's energy conservation commercials began appearing in 1974 on a public service basis.

At issue was a 30-second television spot created by C&W at the request of FEA officials. In the spot, a bejeweled, tanned and robed hand (which Ad Council President Robert Keim calls "obviously Arab") moves oil derricks around a chessboard, eventually checkmating the Statue of Liberty. The voice over says,

Today America is a weakened giant caught in a global game of power. . . . America is paying for it with increasing vulnerability and decreasing independence. And you're paying for it with your dollars. Every energy dollar you waste is a dollar you never will see again. . . . So for your sake and America's sake, try to find a way to save energy today.

The council, with the concurrence of the C&W hierarchy, rejected the spot because of what Keim calls its political nature. "National policy is still being evolved," he explained.

"Congress and the White House have yet to agree on an energy program." The council was supported editorially by *Advertising Age*, the ad world's weekly journal, for what it called "a sobering reminder of the perils when government tries to use advertising (public service or paid) to project its version of a complicated public issue." The editorial said a government ad should neither seek to assign blame nor reflect anything more than the view of individuals administering a program.

Andrew Sansom, director of FEA's Office of Conservation Education, says, "It's not placing the blame. It's just telling the truth. There are individuals, countries and companies taking unfair advantage of us. We're being strangled. It's not political. Everyone agrees that we're vulnerable."

FEA officials wonder aloud about possible oil company influence on the council. C&W has no oil company clients; however, five members of the council's board of directors run agencies whose clients include the nation's largest oil companies. Council officials deny any oil company pressure. Keim says that like most large corporations, the major oil companies contribute money to the council.

Though council and FEA officials say there is still a chance of reconciliation, the FEA has advertised for bids from outside agencies to produce another television spot. The spot features a nine-year-old boy looking over a deserted harbor with petroleum installations in the background. The boy says,

My dad says America has to trade away really good things to some other countries to get oil . . . like lots of money and jobs and maybe even some of our independence. . . . But dad says these countries know we need it real bad, so we have to give them anything they want as long as we use so much energy all the time.

This commercial was also prepared by C&W creative people but rejected by management. Sansom says, "One way or another, we're going to produce it." He says the FEA will not buy time but send the

spot directly to networks and stations for consideration as a public service message, bypassing the Ad Council.

An indication of FEA's determination to become more hard-hitting in its ads without Ad Council support is the reorganization in July of its Division of Conservation Education into the Division of Marketing and Education. Occupying Sansom's old office is Lee James, acting associate administrator for the new-named division. His specialty is marketing research. According to one insider, Sansom has been set free to concentrate on the theme of American vulnerability to foreign oil.

—MICHAEL ANTONOFF

## Party Favors

The Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, has been in the vanguard of the media's new sensitivity to conflicts-of-interest. The organization's Code of Ethics states in-part that "Gifts, favors, free travel, special treatment or privileges can compromise the integrity of journalists and their employers. Nothing of value should be accepted."

Despite this prohibition, SDX's Cincinnati chapter recently hosted a cocktail party for the press attending the Midwest Governors Conference. The reception was paid for, not by SDX, but by three of Cincinnati's major businesses—Proctor & Gamble, Federated Department Stores and General Electric.

Steve Douglas, president of the SDX Cincinnati chapter, said the firms contacted his chapter, indicated they were going to pay for a cocktail party for the press and asked if SDX would play host. Doug-

las, who is a newscaster on Cincinnati's WLW-TV, said the corporations were "just going to pay the bill," which totaled \$900 for the approximately 150 persons attending the party.

Douglas saw no conflict between SDX's host role and the ethics code, a position shared by other chapter officers. One officer, Robert Buzogany, is also supervisor of media relations for Proctor & Gamble.

George Pfeiffer, a public relations officer for Federated Department Stores and an SDX member, first raised the idea of the local SDX chapter serving as host for the party. He said he asked the chapter officers whether there might be "a conflict-of-interest question, but nobody felt there was anything that even smacked of being unethical." While Pfeiffer said he regarded the event as primarily social, he added that his firm did have some business interest in it. "We have five stores in the 15 states represented at the conference and we wanted the opportunity to get to know a little" the members of the press corps in these states.

When Cincinnati television station WCPO began to inquire about the propriety of SDX's role as host, the event was cancelled. That decision was made by William Keating, publisher of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and chairman of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce host committee for the governor's conference. The cancellation was quickly rescinded, however, after Pfeiffer told a Keating aide that the controversy surrounding the SDX host role was minor and that, anyway, the Chamber of Commerce committee couldn't unilaterally cancel. The party went on as planned.

—ALVIN P. SANOFF

## Close, But No Cigar

In a full-page spread on various local Memorial Day activities, the Royal Oak (Mich.) *Tribune* included some of the remarks made in a holiday speech by U.S. Representative James J. Blanchard (D.-Mich.). "The world will little remember what we say here," Blanchard was quoted as saying, "but we cannot forget what these brave men have done."

The words are familiar, but the reporter covering the event missed Representative Blanchard's opening statement that he would recite the Gettysburg Address. What's worse, the reporter misquoted Lincoln, who actually said, "The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

*Tribune* managing editor Rude Difazio says he recognized the Lincoln paraphrase but just thought Representative Blanchard was not very original. The reporter attributes the confusion to a faulty PA system at the speech.

Susan Laird, Blanchard's administrative assistant, says he received only one letter from a constituent who complained that the speech was not more substantial.

—R.F.



Ghostwriter



# How The Press Helped New York Go Broke

BY LOUIS RUKEYSER

It should not go unnoticed by future historians of this bizarre period that New York City, the commercial and financial capital of the greatest economic power in the galaxy, finally became humbled and humiliated simply because it had been so incredibly stupid about money. That it became so under a mayor alleged to have entered office with special credentials as an expert on fiscal matters should add to the shame of the politicians involved. That it all occurred with so little sensible guidance from the city's leading newspapers may add to the sense of wonderment but does little for the glory of journalism.

A close review of all editorials published in the three citywide papers in 1975 suggests that the *Post*, blaming predictable nemeses, resolutely offered yesterday's answers to today's problems. The *Times*, which often seemed born anew each metropolitan morning, regularly carried on a sequential debate with itself. Alone among the three, the *Daily News* seemed to realize early on that the essential truth was simple, not complicated: the city was a spendthrift in trouble, a check-kitter exposed.

The decline, and possible fall, of New York City's finances did not, of course, begin in 1975—nor is its situation altogether unique. In deciding repeatedly to let short-term politics overrule long-term economics, New York has hardly been fighting the national trend of the last decade. There is little exclusivity, either, in New York's daunting array of urban problems, except in their scale. Other cities also have been caught in the recession vise between rising costs and falling revenues. There have been painful layoffs and work disruptions west of the Hudson, too.

But for better or worse, there is no other community in America that attempts to provide services for its citizens on the scale of New York City. Be it welfare or culture, health or education, the range of subsidized services in the city's five boroughs has no match—except, perhaps, in the taxes it levies to pay for them. It is the most heavily taxed city in the most heavily taxed state. In recent years, however, this tax burden has begun to irk even many New Yorkers who had previously been quite chauvinistic about the city's profligacy, which they had interpreted as social awareness, progressiveness and humanity. And so the city government, afraid to boost taxes high enough to pay for the budget it was unwilling to cut, turned to uncontrolled borrowing. It was the enthusiasm with which it embarked on this reckless course—habitually mortgaging tomorrow to pay for yesterday—that truly set New York apart, and gave the editorialists their chance to be wise.

It always has been easier for journalists to label than to think, and this tendency has been in evidence throughout the New York City financial crisis. (The convenient pigeon-holing of the policemen's-union head as "extremist" and the civil-service-union head as "moderate" continued after it became evident that the latter was anything but.) The trouble with such traditional verbal shorthand is that it has almost nothing to do with solving the complicated economic problems of today, urban or national—and, as we shall see, New York's editorialists would often have been more astute if they had forgotten about "liberal" and "conservative," and remembered to check their addition.

From the start, the *Times* editorial page has been a study in confusion. Take the question of increasing taxes. For a while, the *Times* seemed willing not just to bite this bullet, but to chew on it

**It has always been easier for journalists to label than to think. In examining New York's current financial crisis, the editorialists should have forgotten about "liberal" and "conservative" and remembered to check their addition.**

manfully for hours. "This metropolis faces a fiscal crisis from which there can be no escape without drastic cuts in personnel and services and substantial increases in taxes," the paper asserted February 18. Nor was there any doubt in the *Times*'s mind April 11 that the city should be "facing the need for increased taxes on a broad front." A week later, the paper found it "inconceivable" that Governor Hugh Carey "would allow the city to slip deeper into debt without permitting—indeed insisting upon—new taxes." And by May 2, the *Times* duly found tax increases "a more honorable means of meeting the city's rising expense obligations than borrowing or . . . advancing . . . state aid." Indeed, a casual reader of the *Times* might somehow have gotten the impression that the paper favored new taxes for the city.

Before the end of June, however, Mayor Beame was to discover that the toughness urged on him for so long by the *Times* was no longer welcome there. "This newspaper happens to agree," it announced June 27, "that the city in its own interest should not add the full range of new taxes that have been proposed by Mayor Beame to the heavy tax burden already borne by its citizens." By July 3, the *Times* was ridiculing Beame for what it now called "his myopic effort to extract higher taxes from the State Legislature and a cowed citizenry." And four days later, it was telling him with irritation that "every new tax now imposed in New York can only exacerbate the already alarming flight of businesses, jobs and people from the city." At this point, Beame might be forgiven for concluding that, as far as the *Times* was concerned, he just couldn't win.

The same if-you're-a-hawk-I'm-a-dove syndrome was evident in the paper's editorials concerning the other side of the financial ledger: reducing spending through cuts in personnel and services. Again, the Mayor found himself first being urged into bold action, then being assailed when he thought he was taking it. "Incredibly," he was told in a February editorial titled *City Hall Fantasia*, "there is little indication in the Mayor's budget presentation so far that Mr. Beame, once widely hailed as a tough fiscal expert, is prepared at last to grapple with these hard realities." The drumbeat had accelerated by the end of March to an insistence that Beame emerge with cuts in city spending "far beyond" those he had just enunciated, and that he demand "that New Yorkers themselves accept a degree of austerity adequate to the desperation of the city's needs." There was no lack of courage on West 43rd Street: in two April editorials, the *Times* called for "a hard-headedness City Hall has yet to demonstrate" and promised reassuringly that "the Mayor will need and deserve

wide support for the drastic cuts in personnel and services that this will require." That rallying call echoed a position taken by the paper back on November 30, when the *Times* had been advocating a hard line on the necessity for severe economy measures: "We do not underestimate the personal hardship inflicted by any dismissal. . . . But that does not lessen the inescapability of cuts much more severe than those the Mayor contemplates. . . . Draconian cuts right now are the only alternative." A few months later, however, when Beame finally did swing into action, the same paper called his attitude "play-acting" and insisted that "less Draconian alternatives are available."

Sometimes, the *Times*'s memory of its own advice seemed even briefer. On May 14 it defined the options "to cut spending drastically—either through massive layoffs or a freeze on wages—or to slide into bankruptcy," and added: "The longer the Mayor delays facing up to the first option, the more likely and imminent becomes the second." Less than a week later, it termed the Mayor's threat to fire 38,000 municipal employees "an obvious resort to scare mongering."

The new theme had no sooner been sounded than it began to grow into a symphony. In separate editorials in June, the *Times* denounced Beame for taking an approach to the budget "straight out of Frankenstein, its aim to terrify the community," for projecting "self-defeating, even suicidal, slashes in vital services" and for permitting "layoffs to mount into the tens of thousands and essential services to suffer, without first having a real go at saving many millions of tax dollars through cooperation of municipal labor and management in stepping up the efficiency of the city's civil service." Three days after this last blast, the paper found simultaneously that the Mayor had "stooped to . . . fear tactics" and that he "still has not accepted the necessity for drastic curbs on spending." The Mayor did not win the *Times*'s heart even when he spoke up for its pet proposals of a city wage freeze and a reduced work week. And surely he should be forgiven for not knowing precisely which way the paper wanted him to turn on questions of spending and taxes—or borrowing. New borrowing, "a significant part of the problem" one day, had become "inescapable" on another.

The differing *Times* versions of Abe Beame continued to appear. The same fellow who "subsidizes into meek surrender . . . [and] ran away" May 22 is characterized as "stubborn" May 29. He is a "bully" May 31 but "this timid Mayor" July 11, "cynical and ruthless" June 4 but "pusillanimous" July 9. In one lone week in July, he variously "cynically misused" workers, "egregiously abused and misused dismissed workers" and "refused to stand up to unions . . . allied himself with the unions."

But if the *Times* failed to give consistent direction to the mayor (whose position, it acknowledged in December, "is not enviable"), the Mayor was an experienced politician, capable of running in several directions himself. More pertinent is the impact of such lack of editorial steadfastness on the minds of the *Times*'s ordinary readers, who might not have been confused at the start of the crisis but are certainly confused by now.

Indeed, even the *Times*'s editorial writers seemed on occasion not to be reading their own newspaper. In one embarrassing example, on July 22, reporter Maurice Carroll chided some municipal labor leaders for suggesting that the city default on debt-service obligations on grounds that "default would let everyone suffer equally—the banks that have lent the city money as well as the workers who face a possible wage freeze." Carroll observed that "their suggestions appeared to confuse default, in which payment of bills is deferred for a time . . . with bankruptcy, in which a court supervises the affairs of a debtor, deciding who should get paid what." Carroll's vocabulary lesson

Louis Rukeyser, who spent 20 years with the Baltimore Sun and ABC News, is now an independent television commentator, lecturer and author. He is the host of PBS's Wall Street Week, the only weekly national TV program about money.



# The Ascent of Man



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apparently did not penetrate the editorial sanctum. On the very same day, the lead editorial declared: "Default means bankruptcy."

Consider, as one final example, the *Times's* attempts to elucidate the finer points of municipal-securities financing. In January, the paper thundered against "the outrageously high levels New York has been compelled to pay to the financial community in its recent flotations" and explained authoritatively that the 9.4 per cent interest rate required for short-term city notes "was grossly inflated, as evidenced by the speed with which investors gobbled up the \$620-million issue." The financial community, it added in a third editorial on the subject, had taken "unfair advantage" by insisting on this "staggering rate for tax-exempt notes that represent a first lien on the resources of America's biggest city." By February, when new notes were unloaded at 7.55 per cent interest—a "refreshing contrast," the paper crowed—it went even further, denouncing the previous rate as "exorbitant."

The reality of the banks' dilemma, in trying to find a market for the securities of a city in enormous debt and growing disrepute, dawned on the *Times* only slowly. In March, when notes came out at 8.69 per cent interest—superficially, still lower than the hated January rate but actually "substantially higher relative to prevailing market rates than was the case in the earlier offering"—the *Times* found this "staggering" and "outrageously high, given the general easing in interest charges." When its indignation was over, however, the paper now found it prudent to add that "it would be folly to ignore the growing apprehension in the financial community about the city's own fiscal practices and position."

**A**pril was the cruelest month for fiscal awakening, with city bonds selling at two-thirds of face value and the city's "A" credit rating (third from the top) suspended by Standard & Poor's. The *Times* apparently came to feel that those "unfair," "staggering," "exorbitant" bankers may not have been operating purely out of evil greed after all. By May, in referring to that first controversial issue of notes, the *Times* seemed to be washing its hands of the matter: "city officials," it recalled, had been forced to accept "what they called an 'outrageous' . . . interest rate." Now, the *Times* went on, the city had been faced with something far more serious—the "humiliating prospect" of not being able to market its notes at any price—and the anger of January apparently appeared a bit excessive.

The *Times* eventually came to realize that the municipal-bond market was not necessarily immoral simply because it refused to swallow all the debt New York City cared to issue, and at interest rates the city considered suitable. No such second thoughts seemed to trouble the *Post*, which wins the prize for clinging unchangeably to the same set of villains it has been flaying for decades. It seemed to outdo even Mayor Beame in pointing its finger at just about everybody but the authentic culprits: the politicians and voters of New York City—and the papers that egged them on.

As late as April 28, when the *Times* was coming to realize that it might take more than an emotional assault on the perverseness of Wall Street to understand the city's debt problems, the *Post* was still happily flaying the bankers. While acknowledging that "New York City's fiscal crisis is serious, and there is no realistic prospect of sufficient federal and state help to permit local relaxation," the *Post* praised as "wholly valid" the demand of Victor Gotbaum, leader of the civil-service union, for a climate of "equality of sacrifice." The paper found that Gotbaum had "persuasively argued that the interest rates exacted from the city by leading banks have been indefensibly high in a time when municipal employees are being asked to carry a heavy burden of retrenchment programs."

It was the unions, however, not the banks, that bloated the city's payroll with unproductive workers and contributed so measurably to the deterioration of the city's credit. From 1963 to 1973, tough unions and weak mayors combined to increase New York's total labor cost an average of 10.4 per cent annually—more than twice the com-

parable increase in the federal civil service. New York has one civil servant for every 24 citizens, as compared with one for 55 in Los Angeles, and one for 73 in Chicago. While part of the reason for the disparity is that New York has had to provide many services that other cities get from state, county or federal aid, this still does not close the gap. Even when other aid is considered, New York's per capita spending remains dramatically higher; 65 per cent more than Los Angeles's and more than twice Chicago's. Yet the *Post* was untroubled by Gotbaum's having indignantly "noted that some of the high-salaried officers of the banks are members of the Mayor's Economic Development Council advising Beame to press for layoffs and/or wage cuts"—though it did think he had gone a trifle far rhetorically in referring to these economic counselors as "slobs."

The *Post*, one sensed, would have liked to believe the whole incredible mess was just one more installment in the ongoing battles of American liberalism—that the traditional enemies of the Old Left had contrived this disaster, too. The closest it came to departing from this comforting view was on May 22, when it conceded that "it would be as inane to propose that the civil service bear the full burden of all the economies that will be necessary



Civil service union leader Victor Gotbaum during a break in negotiations with the city. The *Post* praised Gotbaum's demand for "equality of sacrifice," but seemed not to realize that it was the unions, not the banks, which had bloated the city's payroll.

as it would be to recommend that the city ignore the crisis, contrive new budget gimmicks, or blame everything on the banks, vulnerable as they are on some issues."

This kind of Bonnie-and-Clyde economics is undoubtedly popular (banks have even fewer devoted fans than oil companies), and it does stir the blood when the urban populists get out their guitars on West Street. But it shows almost no knowledge of what goes on in the world of municipal securities. The banks have scant desire to hold all the city's debt, at any interest rate; their aim is not to extract unduly high interest but to make a profit from the spread between the rate they receive and the rate at which they resell to others. In fact, the banks over the years have held on to an estimated \$1.5 billion in New York City securities, and they bravely took on \$700-million of the first \$1-billion in bonds issued by the Municipal Assistance Corporation ("Big Mac"), the state agency that was formed when the city finally could not sell its securities at any price. The city's leading bankers are not saints, but they do realize that the economic future of their own institutions is tied to the city's economic viability, and it is wholly unrealistic to blame the city's plight on financial flinthearts. It is equally unrealistic to expect the banks—whose economic function is not intended to be eleemosynary—to disregard their responsibility to their own shareholders to insist on a rate of return at least faintly commensurate with the perceived risks involved in the loan. Indeed, it is probably more accurate to argue that the bankers erred by being too

complaisant for too long—and thus implicitly encouraging the runaway growth of the city's expense budget (more than \$11-billion in 1974-75, as compared with less than \$2-billion each for Chicago and Los Angeles) and of the city's irresponsible borrowing (close to half of all the short-term tax-exempt notes outstanding in the nation were issued by New York City). Non-New Yorkers became understandably skeptical about the city's ability to meet even legal obligations to pay interest, if such obligations conflicted with city-union demands. But the fault lay not in the stars and spires of Wall Street, or in the Republican farmers of Albany or Washington—and to blame the bankers for high interest rates was like blaming the thermometer for high temperatures.

The *Post* remained an ostrich to the end: When Mayor Beame bowed to what the paper had called "fantastic demands" for an inevitable increase in the transit fare, it denounced him for "an act of unworthy panic and moral exhaustion" designed "to satisfy prospective Big Mac investors." But its tabloid rival, the morning *News*, distinguished itself by an early and clear perception of the true nature of the crisis. Pointing out repeatedly that the city "simply doesn't have the means to satisfy" the unions to which previous administrations had toadied, the *News* declared as early as January 21 that it was "no longer a question of whether the city should pare labor costs, but only a matter of how it is to be done—through wholesale layoffs, or by workers forfeiting some of the benefits they now receive or are scheduled to get." Observing in March that "a work force that has doubled in size in the last 10 years must have plenty of flab," the *News* also offered a prescient view of the municipal-securities mess: "The fact is that the city has gone to the borrowing well too often. The money markets are so saturated with New York City paper that the stuff is close to being unsaleable—except at extraordinarily high interest rates." In two sentences, the *News* had conveyed more truth on this subject than all the conventional anti-banker tirades of the *Times* and *Post*—and had better prepared its readers for the traumatic events of summer.

**W**hile other editorialists tended to regard the public-union leaders as the compassionate vox populi, the *News* subjected their claims to close audit and spoke up for the three million New Yorkers working in the private sector and paying taxes to support the others. Anyone who has studied the featherbedding prevalent in the municipal unions can hardly doubt that these were sentiments worth airing after ten years in which the city budget had been allowed nearly to triple. (One all too characteristic example of union padding: When State Comptroller Arthur Levitt audited New York's Transit Authority, he found that it took 18-man teams of car-cleaners to do the work routinely performed by 12-man crews in Boston, Chicago, Montreal and southeastern Pennsylvania.) Moreover, while focusing on the city's own responsibility for its situation, the *News* conspicuously avoided the temptation to seek popular scapegoats—to which its competitors so frequently yielded. When Mayor Beame criticized the financial community for not restoring investor confidence in New York notes, the *News* observed: "Presumably, in his eyes, the bankers committed a grievous offense by speaking the truth instead of going along with the city's subterfuges and deceptions." And when the other papers railed against the Ford Administration for failing to bail out the city with federal cash, the *News* alone seemed to realize (1) how many other cities would get in line if New York's request was granted; (2) what an ephemeral solution to New York's problems this would have been, and (3) that the federal government was mildly in the red itself. The *News* pointed out that the answer lay not in Washington or Albany, but in recognizing that "the time has come to eliminate or curtail some programs and, above all, ruthlessly trim the payroll."

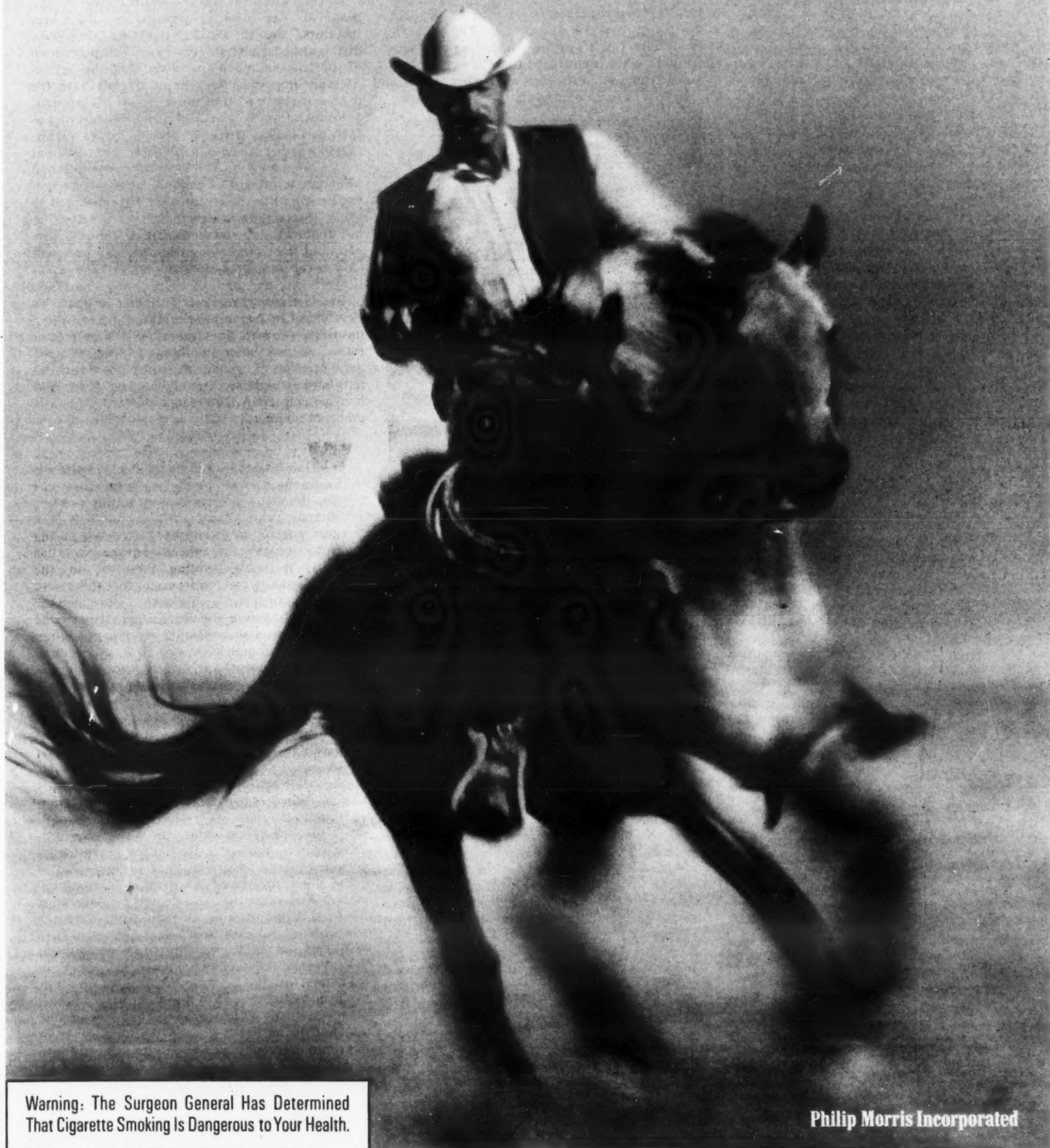
Certainly, the *News's* performance was not superhuman: it was, perhaps, quicker to call for spending cuts than to spell them out in detail. And it is undeniably easier, and more customary, for

(continued on page 23)





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# The Monkey On Hearst's Back

BY DAVID M. RUBIN

A \$32 million libel case, as richly plotted as a good detective thriller, is beginning to unfold in the Bay Area. The defendant is the *San Francisco Examiner*, once the proud flagship of the Hearst chain, now a struggling afternoon paper with a sickly circulation of 170,000 and little influence within its own community. Plaintiff is Synanon, the controversial non-profit corporation which treats dope addicts, alcoholics and other individuals with character disorders by offering a substitute family within a rigidly structured environment. The opponents are a perfect ideological match: a conservative, slightly right-wing newspaper encrusted with layers of aging white executives left over from various San Francisco newspaper mergers vs. an organization based on communal living which requires racial and sexual integration in its facilities. Nearly four years in gestation, the suit has produced a stack of motions, pleadings and interrogatories at the San Francisco County Clerk's office already six feet high. As a few details leak into the bi-weekly *Bay Guardian* or the daily *San Rafael Independent-Journal*, legal maneuvering continues. In the absence of an out-of-court settlement (always a strong possibility in a libel suit), the case will come to trial in the spring.\*

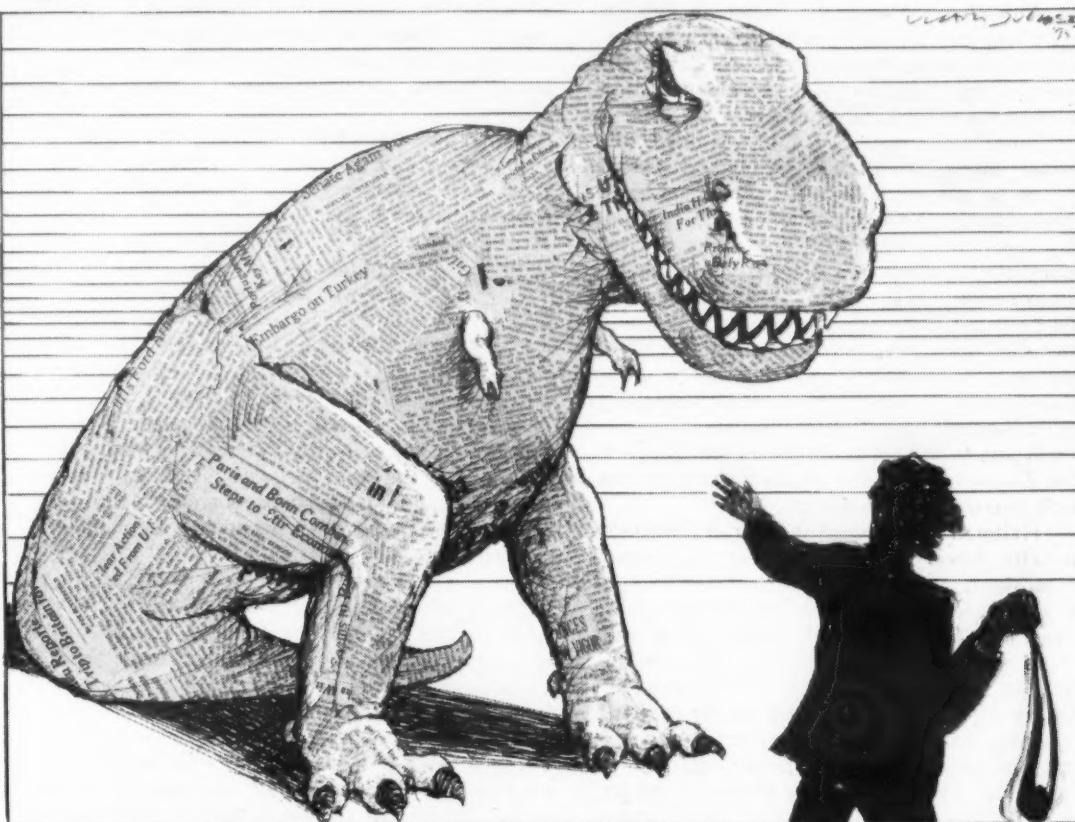
When it does, attorney E. John Kleines, a member of the *Examiner's* socially-prominent law firm of Garret McEnerney II, will be forced to defend the work of one of the less reputable reporters in American journalism. He is Robert Patterson, who wrote the two exposé stories on Synanon (appearing Jan. 13 and 25, 1972) that led to the suit. Patterson is a convicted con man, robber and forger who has spent more than 17 of his 60-odd years in such institutions as Sing Sing and Elmira. He has adopted dozens of aliases in his career. He has had a drinking problem. And, incredibly enough, he was fired from his first stint at the *Examiner* in 1949 for concealing that he was on parole from federal prison when he was hired, and for allegations that he was using his local gossip column to shake down San Franciscans.

Why Patterson was hired a second time by the paper in 1967 is still a mystery. Ed Dooley, *Examiner* editor during the period and one of Patterson's strongest champions, says he was a talented writer who had paid his debt to society. Dooley and then-publisher Charles Gould also speak of recommendations on Patterson's behalf from various San Francisco citizens, the two most prominent of whom, Louis Lurie and Jake Ehrlich, are dead. Dick Pearce, editor of the paper's editorial page and an opponent of the rehiring, explains it this way: "Mr. Patterson can be a very persuasive fellow. He can hold up his right hand and swear he's reformed and make everybody in the room believe it. And I think he simply conned people like Dooley and others, and people in the community who spoke in his behalf, and I'm not sure but I think either Randy [Randolph Apperson Hearst, now publisher of the *Examiner* and Patricia Hearst's father] or Bill Hearst [William Randolph Hearst, Jr., Randy's brother and head of all the Hearst Enterprises] were among those who were

\*Only a puritan might expect the *Examiner* itself to provide details of the suit. But the "competitive" morning paper—the healthy *San Francisco Chronicle*—has also written little about it. The two papers are linked in a joint operating agreement in San Francisco and they protect each other's flanks. Joint agreements are legal under the Newspaper Preservation Act only if they do not embrace editorial functions. Newspapers may share circulation, advertising, printing and distribution facilities, but editorial operations must remain separate. The legality of the *Chronicle-Examiner* joint operating agreement was to be tested in court last May in a suit brought by advertisers and the *Bay Guardian* ("Nothing Succeeds Like Failure"—June 1975). The plaintiffs intended to introduce numerous examples of apparent joint editorial effort at the two papers. Non-coverage of the *Examiner-Synanon* libel suit was to have been one such example. (At the request of the papers information on the suit was under court seal and removed from public inspection.) None of this came out in court, however, because the suit was settled prior to trial ("Continuing Sagas"—July 1975).

David M. Rubin is a contributing editor of [MORE] and director of graduate studies in journalism at New York University.

10 [MORE]



Victor Juhasz

**In a case complete with ex-cons, drug addicts, charges of payoffs plus secret tapes, The San Francisco Examiner squares off against Synanon in a \$32 million libel suit.**

caused by Mr. Patterson to believe that he deserved another chance."

That chance started on the copy desk, a safe enough haven; but Patterson was soon back on the street as a reporter. Between 1969 and 1971 the paper received four requests for retractions of his stories, two within the space of one month. In one of the cases, Dooley admits that he and then-city editor Gale Cook "chewed out" Patterson for errors which they found were libelous. In that instance the *Examiner* was saved from a libel suit only because the plaintiff died.

In the first of the two allegedly libelous stories about Synanon, Patterson charges that the organization is the "racket of the century." Synanon, he writes, deludes its contributors; has no specific therapy program for addicts, except to keep them in a zombie-like existence; holds people against their will, and engages in devious book-keeping methods. The second article states that the IRS is investigating Synanon and implies that the charity might lose its valuable tax-exempt status. Patterson's sole source for the allegations in the first story, with the exception of clips from the *Examiner's* library, was a Synanon "splittee" (a person who has left a facility) named Guenther Nuernberger.

Nuernberger is a German alien who currently bounces in and out of the Salvation Army in San Francisco. He has a history of drug and alcohol problems, has difficulty holding a job, has frequently invented a history for himself on employ-

ment applications and is difficult to pin down on matters of fact concerning his experience at Synanon. After reading a draft of the first Synanon article, city editor Cook sent a prescient memo to Patterson in which he wrote, "I think this is excellent reading. My only concern is his [Nuernberger's] credibility."

That credibility, and the degree to which it was checked by the *Examiner*, will be an important point in the libel case. Dan Garret, head of Synanon's legal staff, believes that Patterson swallowed the story of "an obvious crazyman—a bug." The *Examiner* paid Nuernberger \$150 for his story, and Synanon attorneys claim they will produce testimony from Nuernberger's roommate that he sold the story because he needed the money.

As required by California law, Synanon requested retractions of both articles. The *Examiner* refused, and the suit was filed in October of 1972. *Examiner* attorney Kleines states that the paper will rely in part on the defense of truth and privilege, but also on the constitutional defense: that the paper did not write the story with malice; that is, with knowledge that it was false, or with reckless disregard for its truth or falsity. Malice is not easy to prove, but Synanon has some ammunition.

Only one source for rebuttal of the Nuernberger story was contacted at Synanon. Little effort seems to have been made to look at Synanon's financial records, which its attorneys claim were open to the paper. No source within the IRS has been identified to verify the statement that Synanon was being investigated. Dooley himself admits under oath that a wide variety of sloppy reporting practices were attached to the story; he says now that he does not think Synanon is dishonest. Moreover, there is the work of Herb Lawson, Pacific Coast Edition editor of *The Wall Street Journal*. After reading Patterson's articles, Lawson embarked on his own investigation of Synanon for a possible *Journal* feature. It never ran, and Lawson says he found "no evidence of an IRS investigation" of the organization's tax exempt status and "many points" on which the Patterson stories were "erroneous."

The *Examiner's* defense was also jolted by a bizarre twist in the Patterson career. Two months before the Synanon lawsuit was filed, the *Examiner* had occasion to fire Patterson a second time for yet another public embarrassment. This time he had written five stories in June of 1972 which purported to be based on a trip he made inside Mainland



China. Tips came to Patterson's superiors that he had not been inside China at all, and that the whole series had been fabricated in a hotel room in Hong Kong. Publisher Gould called Patterson into his office, whereupon Gould "was satisfied" that Patterson had not made the trip. His dismissal and the *Examiner's* repudiation of the series appear in a front-page box in the edition of Aug. 10, 1972.

Thus, after the libel suit was filed, the *Examiner* found that the key participant was no longer on its payroll. In addition, Patterson hired his own attorney—Vincent Hallinan, a colorful, earthy character celebrated for his spirited defenses of the underdog. Hallinan says that his "main concern" has been "to insure that Patterson would be taken care of by one side or the other." To that end, he approached Synanon's Garrett and offered to try to swing Patterson's testimony to the Synanon side if they would take care of Patterson's needs. Synanon refused, and Hallinan says now that it is just as well, since Patterson remains loyal to the *Examiner* and will testify to support the paper's investigative procedures.

Hallinan did succeed in helping Patterson financially, however. On the advice of attorney Kleines, the *Examiner* has been paying Patterson \$250 a week for "investigative" services since the end of 1972. The payments continue today, with the total now in excess of \$30,000. Hallinan has made Patterson valuable all this time by refusing to let him be deposed, invoking the Fifth Amendment on grounds that Patterson's answers could implicate him in a criminal conspiracy against Synanon to force them to drop the libel suit and put them out of business. (Such a conspiracy suit was filed by Synanon in 1974 for \$20 million in damages and is pending against most of the defendants in the libel suit, so such fears on Hallinan's part are not entirely groundless.) The California State Supreme Court ruled on July 3, 1975 that Patterson must finally be deposed, and that is now scheduled for sometime in the next month or so. It remains to be seen if the *Examiner* will continue its payments to Patterson after the deposition has been taken.

Synanon, of course, claims that the *Examiner* has been paying off Patterson for his testimony. Kleines says Patterson has been earning the money at legitimate investigative duties such as interviewing witnesses and reading files. Patterson himself says he has done "nothing" for the money, and Hallinan could offer few specifics on what his client had done for it. Gould admits that Patterson was re-hired at *Examiner* expense, and justifies it this way: "... the man that was responsible for the articles was not in the employ of the company, and it was necessary ... to get the supporting facts, notes of the man involved. Perfectly logical position to take if you're going to defend yourself."

In an effort to support some of the charges in the Patterson articles and help build the defense of truth, the *Examiner* has made payments to other persons of dubious character. In the course of interviewing Synanon splitees for clues to life inside the facilities, Kleines came in contact with three drug-users and former Synanon residents named Gilbert Faucette, Twilver Earle, and James Chico. Both Faucette and Earle are convicted felons. Chico possessed two tape recordings, and Faucette some 69 more, which had been stolen from Synanon not long after the libel suit was filed. In a practice reminiscent of the Nixon White House, Synanon regularly tape records much of what goes on inside its facilities. This includes Synanon "games" or therapy sessions, in which everyone, directors included, participates, and all are required to speak openly and frankly. Board meetings and business records are also on tape. The contents of such tapes might well be valuable to the *Examiner* defense.

There is no doubt that Faucette, Earle and Chico stole the tapes. Faucette was convicted of burglary earlier this year and sentenced to 90 days in jail and four years probation. Earle was given three years' probation with one year in a drug rehabilitation program. Chico has not been prosecuted, although Synanon attorneys claim he was caught red-handed with tapes in a facility. Faucette

received some \$8,000 from the *Examiner's* lawyers for investigative services, and Chico \$400. The *Examiner* also paid at least \$2,500 for Faucette's attorney in his burglary case. The parties to the suit view these potentially explosive contacts between Faucette, Earle and Chico and the *Examiner's* lawyers from totally different perspectives, of course.

Synanon will hope to show in the conspiracy suit that the *Examiner* and Hearst officials, through their attorneys, directed the trio to steal the tapes from the Synanon facilities. If sustained, such a charge could be devastating to all concerned. It is potentially much more serious than the libel suit. Kleines, who *did* have possession of two of the tapes, claims he did not know they were stolen and denies any role in the burglary. "I did not contact these guys," he says. "I didn't seek them out. They came to us. I haven't listened to a fucking Synanon tape since this thing started. In fact, I've had to get a court order to make Synanon turn over some of the tapes we *do* want to hear. They've been fighting it." (Synanon is reluctant to turn over the tapes for lack of relevance to the case and invasion of privacy.)

One of Faucette's attorneys, Ronald Grassi, has said under oath that Faucette was not being paid by the *Examiner* to steal tapes, but rather to help verify the stories of Synanon splitees. This was Chico's role as well. Both were supposedly qualified to do it as former Synanon residents. Says Grassi, "I personally feel assured Kleines never would have asked anybody to go out and get what may be stolen property. Kleines is and was assured in his mind that he can subpoena tapes from Synanon and get them through normal court procedures and, therefore, has no desire to deal with what may be stolen property." Still, the *Examiner* and its attorneys will have to explain some large payments to rather unsavory characters, including a check reimbursing Faucette for the rental of some tape recorders and the purchase of blank tape, ostensibly to make copies of the Synanon tapes.

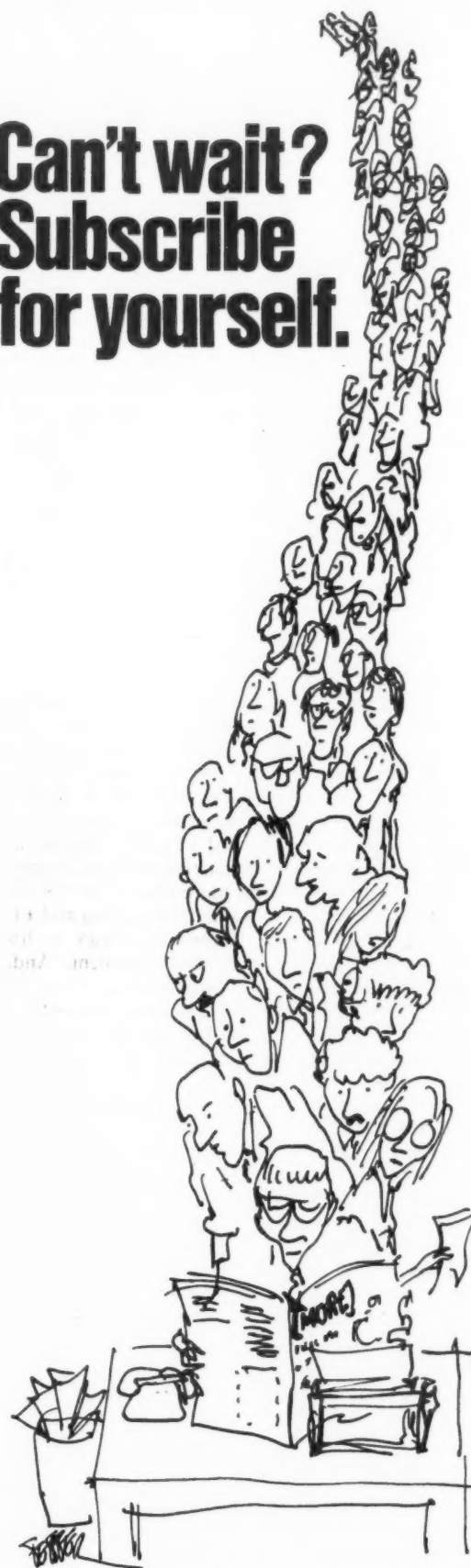
The cost of these suits even before trial, in both financial and human terms, is already impressive. The aging, gravel-voiced Patterson is losing his eyesight, is in generally poor health, and is concerned about collecting a pension from The Newspaper Guild, which is in serious doubt. The three *Examiner* editors who supervised the Synanon stories—Cook, Dooley and Gould—have all suffered career setbacks, although they do not acknowledge that the setbacks are tied to the suit. Cook was busted to reporter. Dooley was eased out at the *Examiner* and offered another job at the feeble Hearst paper in Los Angeles, which he declined. He went instead into public relations work with the California State Bar Association, and he has now left that as well. Gould was kicked up the ladder to head two Hearst foundations.

**A**t Synanon, the suit has taken on a life of its own and the aspects of a holy war. Garrett, head of a legal staff of five that is prosecuting the case, sees the suit as a chance to "identify our enemies clearly." "The talk at all the 'dope fiend' conventions," Garrett says, "has been that it is all over for Synanon—that the *Examiner* did us in. We have to turn around this ghastly business. They may not be able to offer us enough money [in settlement] to stop us now." At this point Garrett and his staff, all of whom live at Synanon, are clearly having fun.

Kleines, who is in the rare position of a media attorney being outgunned legally by the citizen opposition, is not having fun. He estimates that court costs alone are already \$30,000, not counting lawyers' fees on both sides. Seventy depositions have been taken with more to come. "They're harassing the shit out of us," he says. "I'm going completely out of my mind. I never heard of taking so many depositions, even in an antitrust case."

So intense does the trial itself promise to be that Randy Hearst has tentatively decided to hire a neutral outsider to cover it for the *Examiner*. "Not even the best staffer on the *Examiner*," says Kleines, "should be trusted to handle it." One wonders whether the best staffer would want to. ■

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# Extra! Ford Gets Local Ham

BY ALEX TAYLOR 3rd

I don't suppose I could have been called one of Cal's closest friends in college, but I knew him pretty well. In fact, we lived not far from each other, and I used to see him frequently. I'll admit that I never had any notion he'd climb to his present high position and international and historical fame, but even in those days you could see from the way he worked, and the way he looked at a thing from all sides before he went off half-cocked, that in whatever department of life he might choose, he would make his mark. And the next time you hear one of those birds criticizing Coolidge, you just tell 'em *that*, will you, from one who knew him in the days when he wasn't surrounded with adulations.

—From *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*, Sinclair Lewis (1928)

"Dorothy Guck has two old friends in Washington, D.C." *The Grand Rapids Press* reported last fall. "One lives in the National Zoo, the other is in the White House. Although Mrs. Guck claims no credit for her high school classmate President Gerald R. Ford being in the White House, she feels she was instrumental in getting Smokey the Bear a cage of honor at the zoo."

No newspaper of record on most issues, the *Press* (circ: daily, 130,000; Sunday, 140,000) is mining Ford's hometown connections with a vengeance. In covering every local angle of Ford's presidency, it has turned up dozens of former friends and acquaintances who had some connection, however slight, with the President of the United States during the 30 years he lived in Grand Rapids. Careful readers have been able to keep up with Jerry's old school teachers, his tailor, his scoutmaster and a fellow boy scout, his high school football teammates and those he played against, even the fate of his old swimming hole.

Known locally as Plaster Creek, the swimming hole has aged less well than some of the old friends. It now serves as a storm sewer for a Grand Rapids suburb. Still, according to the *Press* last fall, "It may have risen to a national prominence not shared by any other urban drainage stream. A painting of it now hangs in the White House."

Lloyd Lievense, the tailor, isn't cutting suits for Gerald Ford anymore, and chances are Ford is the loser. Around Christmas, a *Press* editor got Lievense to comment on Ford's purchase of some ready-made suits. "He's five-finger bowlegged," said Lievense. "He's got big calves. He's really in great shape. But those trousers are going to twist on him, no question." No question, either, about the kind of clothes Ford used to wear. Lievense continued, "Jerry didn't care anything about clothes. He always wanted something kind of dull; you know, conservative. Something he could wear and see an Ottawa [County] farmer and he wouldn't look like he was over-dressed—just comfortable."

Calling Ford sartorially dull, Lievense is one of the few who will be remembered for a candid remark about the local-boy-made-good. Another is Marjorie Shepard, an English teacher, who described her former pupil as "very fair and square." Whatever other faults Ford may have had, they have been erased by time. Summarizing the reminiscences of other teachers, the *Press* concluded: "They all have kind words for him—how ambitious he was, how eager he was to help others, and just an all-around nice guy, who was going places."

Future greatness for Gerald R. ("Junie") Ford, Jr. was predicted by others, too. One of Ford's teammates on the 1930 undefeated state championship football team, Arthur Brown, has been remembering their heroics together ever since. As the *Press* reported last August, "Brown says he's maintained his friendship with the President ever since they were teammates on South's team, and has the papers to prove it. Among Brown's 'Ford Memorabilia' are three looseleaf folders and a briefcase containing pictures, newspaper articles and correspondence with Ford. One sports article dated 1928 and featuring Ford on the

Alex Taylor 3rd is a reporter for WZZM-TV in Grand Rapids and a freelance writer.

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**Specifically, a VanderBrink sweet-smoked boneless, as the Grand Rapids Press diligently reported in its continuing effort to record the links between local folk and the President.**



front page is proof Brown didn't wait until Ford was elected congressman to start remembering an old friend. 'I've got more material on Ford than I have on myself but don't ask me why—I really don't know,' Brown says."

When the old South High team got together for a reunion at the White House last Thanksgiving, football metaphors rang through the *Press's* headlines: TEAMMATE GETS CALL TO Huddle (Brown was invited to sleep at the White House), PRESIDENT SCORES WITH HIS OLD SOUTH TEAMMATES. It was a sadder day several months later, when a *Press* headline noted, DEATH TAKES 1930 TEAMMATE OF PRESIDENT.

Brown was the only teammate called to huddle, but other former players had nothing but kind words for Ford: "Bold, dedicated, tremendous organizer with exceptional all-around talents"; "Swell guy, honest, sincere and effervescent"; "Real good team player." One player, who became a doctor, remarked: "As a psychologist, I see him as one who inspires confidence and mutual respect."

Football may have been the only thing young Jerry Ford had on his mind in those days. A fellow Eagle Scout recalls a summer he spent with Ford. "Jerry brought his football along with him

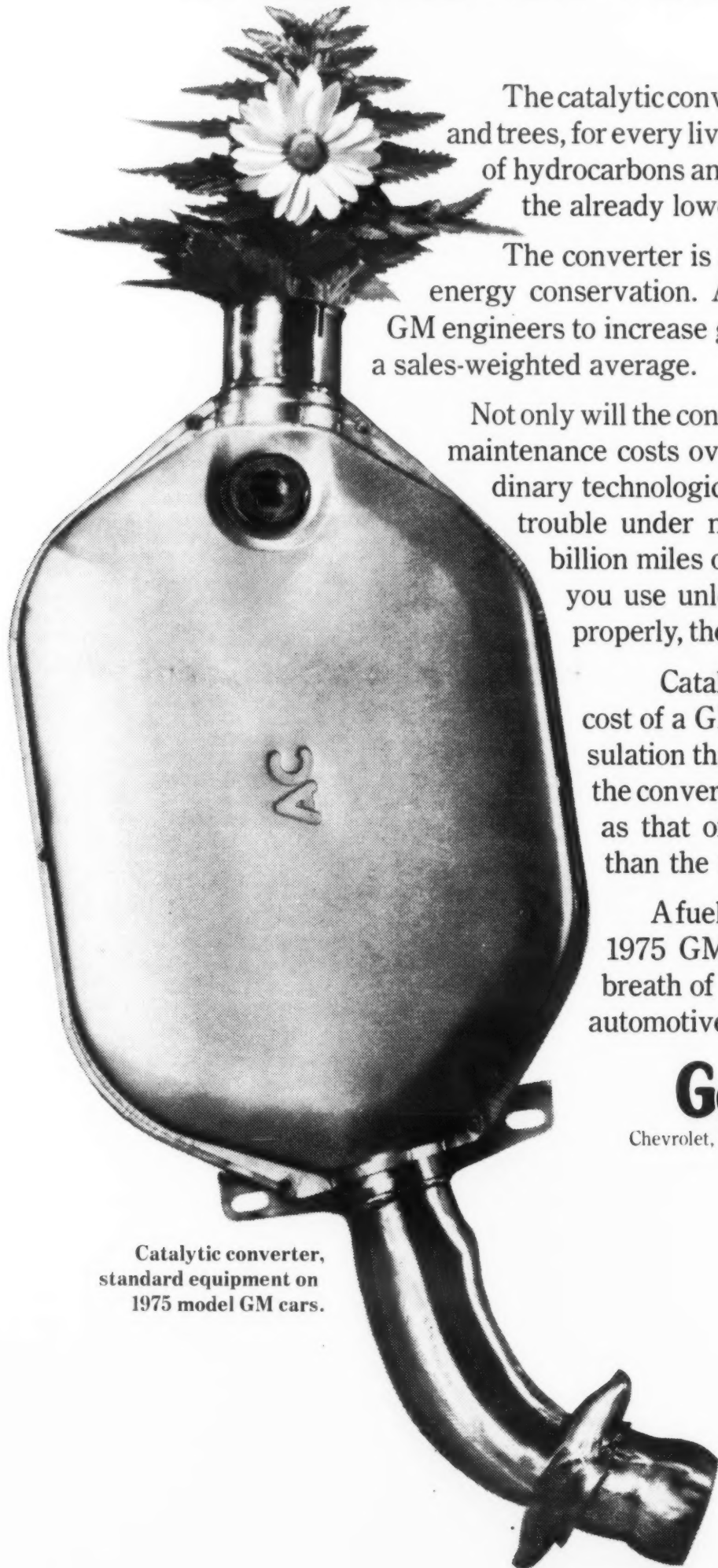
that summer. A couple of the guys were ladies men, but Jerry wasn't like that. He was a good, clean-minded considerate individual."

I've seen less of this kind of thing lately, if only because the supply of football teammates, scoutmasters and teachers is presumably finite. Their place was taken in June by a considerably different group, neighbors of an abandoned house lived. When a White House spokesman said Ford had no interest in saving the house, which is in a now mostly black area, one neighbor was quoted as saying, "They'd be quick to want it preserved if that same house had been in East Grand Rapids [a well-to-do suburb]." Another declared, "They don't want anything to do with it just because it's in this neighborhood." Has the paper dwelt overly long on Ford's former friends? "Heck, no," says Maury DeJonge, the *Press's* chief political writer. "How many presidents have we produced? I think if you put the same situation in a town bigger than Grand Rapids that produced its first president, they would act the same way. I don't think Grand Rapids has gone out of its way to make itself look like Podunkville. I think there are Democrats and Republicans who have every right to be proud that here's a hometown boy who made it all the way."

You don't always have to be an old friend of  
(continued on page 26)



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Wide World

# A Gang of Pecksniffs

When H.L. Mencken died in 1956, he had been a giant on the *Sunpapers* for more than 40 years. He had edited another Baltimore paper before joining *The Sun*. But, of course, he was more than a paperman. "Editor," "Critic," "Author" appeared in the headlines announcing his death; more often, in fact, than did "Newspaperman" or "Journalist." *The Sun's* headline on his death was "H.L. MENCKEN, AUTHOR, DIES AT 75." Yet he loved newspaper work best of all, particularly the writing of stories. Only a few years before he died, he read an article by Stanley Walker, the legend of the *New York Herald Tribune*, on "what makes a good reporter." Walker mentioned Mencken as one of the best. "Dear Stanley," Mencken wrote him, "... as I look back over a mis-  
 find myself more and more convinced that I had more fun doing news reporting than in any other enterprise. It is really the life of kings." Better than most, Mencken knew the kings' crowns were askew. Newspapers and newspapermen were topics he wrote about often during nearly a half-century of criticism and reportage. He may have been a more severe critic of newspapers than of any other facet of life. What follows are some of the things he had to say about his favorite calling over the years. Some of his words are tinged with humor and nostalgia, some with venom, some with wrong-headedness. Most are set down with wisdom and the insight of unique experience. It is fashionable to insist that journalism is a better and more responsible now than it was in Mencken's day. But his shafts are still so true that one wonders how much matters really have improved.

—THEO LIPPMAN

Well, and how are [the typical citizen's] feelings to be stirred up? At bottom, the business is quite simple. First scare him—and then reassure him. First get him into a panic with a bugaboo—and then go to the rescue, gallantly and uproariously, with a stuffed club to lay it. First fake him—and then fake him again. This, in substance, is the whole theory and practise of the art of journalism in These States.

... to the best of my knowledge and belief, the average American newspaper, even of the so-called better sort, is not only quite as bad as Dr. Sinclair says it is, but ten times worse—ten times as ignorant, ten times as unfair and tyrannical, ten times as complaisant and pusillanimous, and ten times as devious, hypocritical, disingenuous, deceitful, pharisaical, peck-sniffian, fraudulent, knavish, slippery, unscrupulous, perfidious, lewd and dishonest. ... Alas, alas! I understate it horribly! The average American newspaper, especially of the so-called better sort, has the intelligence of a Baptist evangelist, the courage of a rat, the fairness of a Prohibitionist boob-bumper, the information of a high-school janitor, the taste of a designer of celluloid valentines, and the honor of a police-station lawyer. Ask me to name so many as five papers that are clearly above this average—challenge me to nominate five that are run as intelligently, as fairly, as courageously, as decently and as honestly as the average nail factory, or building and loan association, or Bismarck herring importing business—and I'll be two or three days making up the list. And when I have made it up and the names are read by the bailiff, a wave of snickers will pass over the assembly after nearly every one. These snickers will come from newspaper men who know a shade more about the matter than I do.

... in general journalism suffers from a lack of alert and competent professional criticism; its slaves, afflicted by a natural inferiority complex, discountenance free speaking as a sort of treason. ... The organs of the craft—and there are journals for journalists, just as there are doctors for doctors—are all filled with bilge borrowed from Rotary and Kiwanis. Reading them, one gathers the impression that every newspaper proprietor in the United States is a distinguished public figure, and every circulation manager a

**"The majority of [newspapermen], in almost every American city, are still ignorant, unmusical, and proud."**

wizard. The editorial boys, it appears, are not down on their jobs; they are not only not down but also heroes. Some time ago, having read such journals assiduously for years, I found my subscriptions to them. I found them so full of preferred the clippings of the Methodist of Temperance, Prohibition and Public

What lies in the way of [overhauling journalism] is simply the profound and almost automatic credulity of the average American journalist. His ingenuous and almost automatic acceptance of everything that comes to him in the way of news would think that his daily experience with the written word would make him suspicious. But he himself, in fact, believes fondly in the word. It is proof against it. But the truth is that he rejects it, it far more often than he rejects it, he most eager swallowing is done in the plainest evidence of its falsity. Let it be a telegram, and his mouth flies open. Let it be a story in by telegraph from a press association, and down it goes at once. I do not say, of course, that all press association news is thus swindled by news editors. When the means are good, he often attempts to check it. But when such news even rejects it. But when such news presents difficulties—in other words, when it is especially easy, and hence, guarded against most vigilantly—his mouth flies open nine times out of ten, and without a second thought

The average Washington correspondent, I believe, is honest enough, as honest as the average United States, though his willingness to work for the National Committees is a time and for other highly dubious work. At other times is not to be forgotten. What is mainly is that he is a man without the force of character to resist the blandishments that surround him from the moment

Theo Lippman, Jr., is an editorial writer with *The Sun* in Baltimore, and he recently edited *Pecksniffs*, a collection of Mencken's writings on journalism. The material on these pages is from that book, which will be published by Arlington House on October 1.



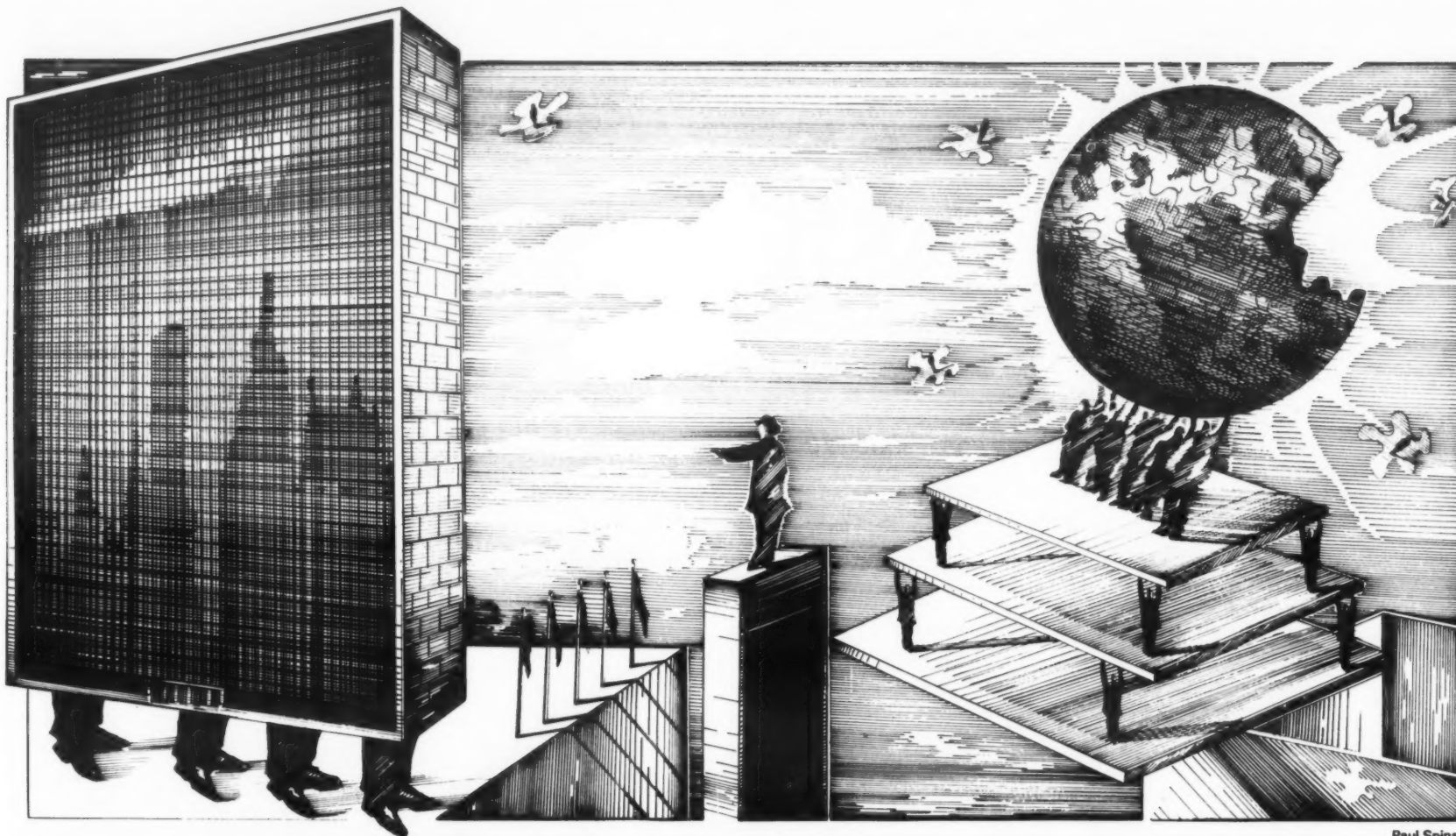
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se pages is taken*

**"I know of no subject, in truth, save perhaps baseball, on which the average American newspaper, even in the larger cities, discourses with unfailing sense and understanding."**

[The tabloids] would be even more successful than they are, I believe, if their editors could resist the temptation to improve them. That temptation, of course, is easy to understand. Every newspaper man worthy of the name

... the gentlemen of the press, as a class, are an unreflective and unanalytical lot . . . they seldom give any sober thought to the anatomy and physiology of the business of their lives. That business, indeed, holds them by its very conditions in a state of mind which is the opposite of the analytical. They enter upon it romantically, and when the romance is gone they go along wearily and unthinkingly. It is a trade that uses men up, especially mentally. That is to say, it is a trade that makes them stupid.





## Covering 'The Tyrannous Majority'

BY ANTHONY ASTRACHAN

The special session of the United Nations General Assembly that opens on Labor Day will provide some good opportunities for serious reportage on international economic and political problems and for entertaining coverage of the diplomatic Big Top, the 138-ring ambassadorial circus. The poor nations will make another attempt to engineer a "new economic order." Henry Kissinger will show what he calls a new readiness to talk about their needs and simultaneously convey the message that America will not serve them up prosperity on a platter. The U.S. delegation will be led by a new ambassador, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a man of wit and erudition who believes the United States should be vigorous in leading the opposition to the present U.N. majority—perhaps fancying himself a Disraeli deflating the oratory of some third-world Gladstone. In short, a lot of good copy for reporters who ask the right questions.

I don't really expect to see much good copy about the special session, however, or about the 30th regular session that will follow before the month is out. Chances are the American coverage will display the same shortcomings it has for 30 years:

- Focusing on the U.N. as an institution coupled with a misunderstanding of the way the institution works.
- Ignoring the realities of the world around the institution.
- Failure to get inside the minds of other people and other countries, to understand the antagonists.

The same problems plague American coverage of all foreign affairs, in Saigon and Santiago, Moscow and Mozambique. They were reflected with particular clarity in the failure of American newspapers, with a few honorable exceptions, to give full or perceptive accounts of three major events in the U.N. universe last year: an April special session of the Assembly that showed American diplomacy at its worst; a regular session that gave us legitimate reason for righteous anger but also showed how little we understood of the third world, and a UNESCO session in Paris that appeared to clobber Israel but inflicted more serious damage on

Anthony Astrachan was a Washington Post correspondent in the Soviet Union, Africa, Canada and the United Nations from 1967 to 1974. He is now a freelance writer in New York.

**When the United Nations convenes this fall, the press may again pay a lot of attention to the third world's sometimes antic behavior. But will reporters bother to explore the reasons for it?**

UNESCO itself. Reading the 1974 coverage of *The New York Times*, the *New York Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and what I could lay my hands on from *The Chicago Tribune* and *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* only confirmed gloomy expectations drawn from long experience. In most cases, the same reporters and editors will be responsible for 1975 U.N. coverage.

Last year's April special session was the third-world's first attempt to create a new economic order through the U.N.—and in the process, to undermine Kissinger's efforts to resolve the energy crisis. Those aims were noted in the sparse coverage the session received. What was not shown was the way U.S. diplomacy brought disaster on its own head. Kathleen Teltsch of *The New York Times*, for instance, reported before the session started that

American officials have so far kept aloof from the preparations for the Assembly session, criticizing what they describe as lack of adequate planning, and they have expressed concern that the debate not hamper Secretary Kissinger's initiatives outside the United Nations.

Perceptive reporting, even if buried in the seventh paragraph of a story with a soporific lead about developing countries proposing that the Assembly endorse a declaration. Later Teltsch stories chronicled last-minute U.S. participation in the planning, all the major speeches and the abortive U.S. aid proposal.

But nowhere in a month's coverage did the *Times* or any other paper I checked report two facts that ambassadors were pointing out in corridor conversations before the session was a week old: U.S. reluctance to take part in the planning reinforced the third-world belief that America does not care about their hunger, their poverty or what they see as a world economic system that handicaps them unfairly. The poor countries therefore reacted by seeking resolutions without caring how palatable they were to the rich—to us.

At the start of the session, *The Washington Post* also reported facts without focussing on consequences. The Americans were eager for consensus resolutions on economics to avoid confrontations on recorded votes. Many papers reported the acrimonious negotiations needed to produce a consensus—and the "reservations" to the final consensus—that the U.S. and others expressed. But nobody reported that western participation in the making of a consensus—to which we could never sincerely subscribe—had made some of the poor countries think we were weak, leaving the U.S. at a diplomatic disadvantage. Third-world diplomats were saying just that. The U.S. eventually recognized the fact and insisted on voting, losing every time, at the Geneva summer session of the Economic and Social Council (which went largely unreported in the American press).

Teltsch and Michael Berlin of the *New York Post* reported the most important part of the American diplomatic failure: Kissinger and George Schultz, then Secretary of the Treasury, kept battling over proposed U.S. aid to the poor (Schultz thought a drop in oil prices would do more for them than a rise in food supplies). Kissinger went off to the Middle East, ignoring pleas for quick action from the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, Berlin reported, and finally approved a \$4 million package while he was in Algiers—but so late in the session that the Assembly rejected it out of hand.

Neither Teltsch nor Berlin, however, in otherwise competent analyses of the session, drew the obvious conclusion that the Kissinger-Schultz hassle and Kissinger's delay were the diplomatic equivalent of criminal negligence. Perhaps if they had, their editors might have charged them with the grave sin of editorializing; but the editorial columns of their papers also failed to arrive at judg-

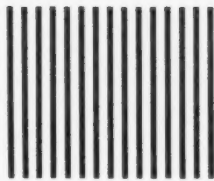
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ment. Ironically, high State Department officials make the judgment now—but not for attribution. Similar problems of economic planning and diplomatic tactics are presumably being faced or avoided this year, but one month before the special session, nobody had reported on them from either Washington or the United Nations—only on their pallid reflections in Kissinger's speeches and Moynihan's first U.N. press conference.

Algeria called for the special session last year, and a variety of third-world views provided its motor energy. Most papers covered the official positions: President Houari Boumediene of Algeria, the *Times* reported,

called on underdeveloped countries today to wrest control of their resources from foreign domination ... advocating nationalization of resources and control of sales abroad. But he also urged continued foreign assistance for underdeveloped countries and proposed that the \$80 billion now owed by poorer lands be canceled or renegotiated.

That does justice to Boumediene's speech, but it conveys nothing of the intense emotions that the poor countries feel about their plight. An Asian diplomat suggested jokingly a couple of years ago that the U.S. Mission should hire a social psychologist to train the U.S. Ambassador in the art of comprehending the third-world mentality. But the U.S. diplomats, many of whom have served with credit in Africa, Asia and Latin America, do better with the third world than most U.S. correspondents.

The best job on this occasion was done by Don Shannon of *The Los Angeles Times*, who missed half the American political news but reported third-world complaints several times—the basic feeling of injustice over the fact that countries with 70 per cent of the world's population have only 30 per cent of the income, for instance; or the charge that the rich countries, which care so much about higher oil prices, are indifferent to the ravages of inflation in countries already chronically short of the resources needed for mere subsistence. Yet Shannon, too, found his meat in on-the-record speeches, adding little from his experience as a reporter in Africa and Japan.

Economic expertise is even harder to find in the U.N. press section than experience of developing countries. No major U.S. newspaper put the western and third-world views of the economic system together in connection with the special session, or explained what either set of ideas might or might not do to resolve the crisis. None analyzed the suitability of the Assembly or other U.N. agencies for the economic, as distinct from the political, task.

**T**he same failure to relate happenings in U.N. bodies to the realities of great- and small-power diplomacy, of third-world psychology and of economics, plagued coverage of the regular session of the Assembly in the fall. Yet Assembly events elicited more press interest than any year since 1971, when Peking was seated after decades of U.S. opposition. Most papers I saw covered the 18 major events of the 29th General Assembly, among them President Ford's opening speech, the suspension of South Africa, the pistol-packing appearance of Yasir Arafat and U.S. Ambassador John Scali's diatribe against the "tyranny of the majority."

The coverage showed a tendency to agree with the postulates of Scali's angry speech. Of course, from the western point of view, it is unrealistic for the Assembly to adopt resolutions by huge, automatic majorities composed of third-world and Communist states when the opposition of the industrialized nations makes the resolutions unenforceable. From the western point of view, the third world is unrealistic in its perceptions of military power, international finance, the role of morality in diplomacy and the utility of rhetoric. The third world neatly demonstrated its failure to understand us in the reply to Scali by Ambassador Abdellatif Rahal of Algeria. He said that the increasing disenchantment of the American people with the United Nations, which Scali had cited, was not a reaction to the real work of the U.N. It was, Rahal said, a reaction to the "false reports carried in a partisan

and rather unscrupulous press," to the "distorted image of the United Nations provided by the organs responsible for informing Americans." Paul Hofmann of *The New York Times* put Rahal third in his story, after the polemics of representatives of Southern Yemen ("duplicitous") and Guinea ("blackmail and intimidation")—along with a riposte by Scali saying that "those who were accusing the American press of partisanship 'will learn differently as they get to know us better.'"

The American press was certainly not partisan in the Zionist-conspiratorial sense that Rahal suggested. But I found myself wondering why newspapers that paid so much attention to third-world behavior at the Assembly almost never wrote about the reasons for it. Some papers noted that the third world had divided into two groups—the poor poor, or resourceless, nations, and the rich poor, led by the oil producers. The poor poor keep rallying around the rich poor, despite the fact that oil price rises hurt the poor poor worse than the really rich (us). The West kept expecting the two sets of poor to argue, if not do battle, and they didn't. Why?

The most obvious reason is the simple hope for aid from the oil producers, despite many indications that the oil-rich are not going to pump out enough money to fill the need. Some of that was reported in the American papers. But there is also a combination of psychology and history that goes beyond Franz Fanon, whose colonial psychodrama is often cited by third-world intellectuals. Both sets of poor have a long history of political subjugation, economic exploitation and racial discrimination. Most of the third world had a superficial training in western values grafted on to very different cultures, and some of its leaders are now trying to cast off parts of the colonial heritage they dislike. Most of these leaders—and their nations—are desperate for economic development—a grim political reality even for diplomats and cabinet ministers who drive Mercedes and dine at Lutèce, as well as a grim human drama. It's hard to find these things in American papers even when they focus on third-

world actions at the U.N. that are the consequence of such realities.

**I**t was equally hard to find the equivalent realities in any paper's picture of Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, the president of the 29th Assembly and the man responsible for much of what irked the West during the proceedings. Most media reported his major rulings, of course: that South Africa could not participate in the Assembly, for instance, and that no country could speak more than once in the Palestine debate, which left Israel alone against 17 Arab states. At the beginning of the session, a profile in *The New York Times* by Lawrence Van Gelder only skated the surface:

Mr. Bouteflika has achieved a reputation as an enemy of imperialism, as a skilled behind-the-scenes negotiator and as a man who wins the esteem of those who deal with him, even when they dislike what they regard as his radical anti-Western positions.

A later piece by Paul Hofmann emphasized western "uneasiness" and "perplexity" at Bouteflika's rulings and contrasted his behavior with the evenhanded performance of the two Communists who had been Assembly presidents. A *Washington Post* piece emphasized a line from Bouteflika's inaugural address in which he said he accepted the office as a representative of "generations of freedom fighters who contributed to making a better world with weapons in their hands."

That was a little closer to the important part of Bouteflika's character. But nobody reported that Bouteflika's days with the Algerian government-in-exile had given him Machiavellian, paranoid attitudes that still affect his present behavior—though Arab diplomats used such phrases to describe even the way Bouteflika windowshopped on Fifth Avenue. Nor did anybody report that Bouteflika refused to announce President Ford's visit the day before Ford was to address the Assembly, despite prompting from Waldheim and Under Secretary General Bradford Morse. And Mike Berlin was ap-

## The Turtle Bay Team

Nobody knows how many correspondents are in the United Nations press corps, because so many come in for a week here and a week there, or cover only a particular subject (the law of the sea), or a particular U.N. agency (the U.N. Development Program). Kenneth Kelly, the official in charge of press accreditation, uses a rule-of-thumb figure of 360 accredited, of whom perhaps 60 are full-time. The U.N. Correspondents Association lists 179 full members in its 1975 directory.

It's hard to define a full-time U.N. correspondent. The press sections on the third, fourth and eighth floors of the big glass building are full of correspondents who seem to be around all the time but do only a few stories a year about U.N. activities. Some are reporters from other countries who cover the United States from Turtle Bay because the U.N. gives them free desks and typewriters. Some are American freelancers or reporters who cover New York for out-of-town newspapers, doing the same thing.

The U.N. press corps also has a surfeit of members accredited to media that have forgotten they exist or to press services that exist only in their own minds. Their very raison d'être is bound up in their purported work as correspondents, however; when U.N. officials tried to move one of them out of his desirable office space to a more obscure corner a few years ago, he threatened to commit suicide by jumping out the window.

The U.N. press corps probably holds the record for length of service. Fifteen of the 179 current UNCA members were listed in the 1955 directory, including one correspondent for each

major news agency and *The New York Times*. Twenty-eight were listed in the 1961 directory and 50 in the 1969 directory. This may explain why so much U.N. reporting is written in political terms that were appropriate for Korea or Hungary or the Cuban missile crisis but no longer have much real meaning, and why so little shows much understanding of the third world.

Despite the high length of service, major media coverage is dwindling. The elite papers of the developed world carried less about the U.N. in 1972 than they did in 1968, according to a survey by the U.N. Institute for Training and Research—a trend that has continued since 1972. *The New York Times* bureau still has two correspondents plus extra manpower during the Assembly, but the fact that the young A.M. Rosenthal (now managing editor) once covered the U.N. has not prevented the *Times* from reducing the attention it devotes to the U.N. each year. *The Christian Science Monitor*—whose managing editor, Earl Foell, is also a former U.N. correspondent—transferred its last full-time U.N. man to California and now has one of its New York correspondents cover when necessary. *The New York Daily News* closed its U.N. bureau in 1974, but sends someone over when things heat up. *The Los Angeles Times* has just shifted its U.N. man, Don Shannon, to Washington to cover the State Department, but he expects to visit the U.N. several times a year. *The Washington Post* closed its U.N. bureau in 1974, maintaining that it needed the money to reopen its Latin America bureau.

—A.A.



parently the only one to report that when Waldheim protested Arafat's sporting a holster in the house of peace, Bouteflika told Waldheim it was none of his business. Such insights might have contributed as much to understanding the 1974 United Nations as the spate of stories about the security problems caused by Arafat's presence in New York. Berlin again seems to have been the only reporter who noted that the quarrel between U.S. and Palestine Liberation Organization officials over security had taken on political overtones. The United States tried to limit the number of PLO officials who would get visas, for instance. Thus, the final arrangements for Arafat's flying visit became a political as well as a logistical victory for the Arabs.

Arafat's appearance was clearly the dominant event of the Assembly, and the papers made a valiant effort to give their readers a glimpse of the PLO mentality in pieces like Berlin's profile in the *New York Post*, based on clips and interviews with other PLO representatives here, and a Juan de Onis interview with Arafat in Beirut before he came to New York, in the *Times*.

Berlin's piece gained in depth by contrasting Arafat's present ambiguity with his former calls for Israel's destruction. It related "the fantasy world of the U.N." to the real world in which Arafat's speech was broadcast around the world, "even to Israel," by satellite, a real world in which "U.N. victories represent paper progress," so that westerners theorize that Arafat will achieve real progress only by coming to terms with the U.S. and Israel.

De Onis's interview was free of the phony diplomatic talk about PLO moderation that Sol Stern explored in these pages ["Has The Press Abandoned Israel?"—February 1975], but it was still trapped in the rhetoric that was part of Arafat's diplomacy. De Onis asked him, for instance, if there could be a peaceful border between Israel and a future Palestinian state on the West Bank of the Jordan, and Arafat replied, "Why is everything being asked of the Palestinians? . . . Why should the victim be asked to clarify his proposals when the victimizer withholds any proposal to rectify the situation?"

Only one piece about Arafat combined the surface events and the historical background with an ability to get inside the mind of one's antagonists and to relate seemingly disparate events that constitute journalism at its best. That was David Holden's brilliant, lengthy portrait in *The New York Times Magazine* of March 23, four months after Arafat's appearance at the U.N. (It can take a long time to get a good correspondent and Arafat in the same place at the same time, ready to talk.) Holden quoted one of Arafat's advisers as saying that he went to the U.N. "seven-eighths a statesman and only one-eighth the gunman that he used to be." The article described the attitudes and behavior that have made the Palestinians call themselves "the Jews of the Arab world." It recounted the history of the PLO, the development of its variegated movements, and the way it has become the most highly organized of all liberation movements that have no territory of their own. It reported the Soviet pressures that made Arafat try U.N. diplomacy and the reason that he still cannot accept the U.N. resolutions on which everybody else bases any hope for Middle Eastern peace (the resolutions treat the Palestinian question only as a refugee problem). Holden suggested, as no U.N. reporter did, that Arafat might settle for a West Bank-Gaza-East Jerusalem state "if only he could maneuver or fight his way into a position where that might be offered to him."

All the dramatics of the Palestinian debate hinged on Arafat's speech, but most of the coverage of the speech was conventional. Hofmann in *The New York Times*, Shannon in *The Los Angeles Times* and Vincent Butler in the *Chicago Tribune* all followed journalism-school rules by searching for the formal point, however hollow, and finding it in Arafat's call for a Palestinian state of Moslems, Christians and Jews, which Israel said would mean its own destruction and replacement by an Arab state. Marilyn Berger of *The Washington Post*

preferred an equally hollow set of atmospherics. She said Arafat "proclaimed . . . that the killing in the Middle East would end 'once a just peace, based on our people's rights, hopes and aspirations, is finally established'." She put Arafat's most quoted remark in her second paragraph—"I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." She said Arafat spoke in "melodic Arabic," which left her one-upped by Holden, who noted that Arafat's Arabic is so bad that after the U.N. speech his colleagues named him "Chairman of the Anti-Arabic Syntax Association."

No news column that day carried an explicit reminder that Arafat's appearance was only one of a thousand elements in the Middle East crisis—and not necessarily even the last word from Arafat himself. If any reporter had inserted that in a news story or written a separate analysis to make the point, he would have looked like a prophet four months later, when Arafat's wing of the PLO staged a startling bit of terrorism in the Tel Aviv equivalent of Times Square. Arafat's chief lieutenant said it was intended to remind Henry Kissinger that there could be no peace in the Middle East without the Palestinians, so Arafat presumably thought his U.N. speech had failed to do the job.

Apart from the Palestine debate, the major event of the 1974 Assembly was Bouteflika's suspension of South Africa—after Britain, France and the United States had vetoed an attempt in the Security Council to expel her. The Assembly voted to support Bouteflika's ruling, which the West regarded as illegal. American protests over the suspension were ridiculed by third-world diplomats, who noted that the Americans invented the device of Assembly action to do something that a Council veto had prevented. The first case was the famous "Uniting for Peace" resolution that kept the United Nations in the Korean war in 1950, a bit of history that got very sparse mention in a press more concerned with third-world ploys than with western precedents for them.

There was even less mention of the real significance of the attacks on South Africa—not their doubtful legality, but the way they contradicted African realities. They occurred at a time when South Africa was moving further than ever before to improve relations with black Africa. It had already been reported that South African Prime Minister B.J. Vorster had sent emissaries to Abidjan to meet leaders of the Ivory Coast and Senegal. It eventually came out that he had gone to the Ivory Coast himself, as he later did to Liberia. South African ambassador R.F. Botha pledged in the Security Council that his country would move away from racial discrimination—only words, perhaps, but U.N. words are usually very important to South Africa's opponents. *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* led with the pledge. Paul Hofmann of the *New York Times* played it down. He is one of the few American reporters who has been able to get visas for repeated visits to South Africa. I wondered if his experiences there had made him skeptical of the value of Botha's promise—in which case he should have said so, and why—or if he had just failed to recognize its importance in U.N. terms.

**U**NESCO is independent of the General Assembly, but last year the "tyrannous majority" dominated that body, too. The papers I looked at reported what happened correctly. UNESCO voted to bar Israel from its European regional grouping while admitting Canada, the Soviet Union and the United States. It also voted to suspend aid to Israel (far smaller than Israel's contribution to UNESCO) until Israel stops changing the face of Jerusalem. The first vote changed nothing, but merely left the status quo ante in effect so far as Israel was concerned. The idea took hold, however, that Israel has been expelled from UNESCO. It was spread by communication from diplomats like David Zohar, the Israeli consul in Los Angeles, which were published in papers like the *Cheyenne (Wyo.) Tribune*, and by American public figures like Sen. Hubert Humphrey.

Even the papers that reported the events correctly failed to explore one of the major reasons for them: the Americans and their allies, and perhaps the Israelis, were asleep at the switch in Paris. *The New York Times* gave a single sentence to this failure to foresee what was about to happen. The U.S. government has never taken UNESCO as seriously as the Soviet bloc or the third world. That may have been appropriate for the small political importance that UNESCO originally seemed to have, but it means the other side gets all the benefits, however small. A *Los Angeles Times* editorial noted the complicity of the 31 countries that abstained, like France: the tyrannous majority was only 48 to reject Israeli participation in the European grouping and 33 against. The nonvoting countries "made the difference."

Later stories reported the consequences that the Arabs and their allies had not foreseen: the drying up of financial contributions from the West and the boycott campaigns of intellectuals, artists and performers in many countries. A few stories materialized in the new year on the admittedly futile efforts of UNESCO officials to patch things up. But there was little coverage of the damage that the conflict might do to an organization that has actually made some contributions to education, science and culture. Nobody wrote about the most frightening prospect of damage, offered—presumably unconsciously—by the Afghan delegate to the UNESCO general conference. She said, in effect, "What do we need these intellectuals for? We will find intellectuals of our own." If that kind of "reasoning" holds, UNESCO will have committed the ultimate form of damage to itself: suicide.

**I** hope some journalist puts all the little stories together before that happens and shows what it will mean to the world. A lot of what is wrong with American coverage of the United Nations is the failure to put the bits and pieces together, to find the missing elements, to interpret them. It's a failure to draw a full picture that might help the reader understand what's going on. I don't meant the pseudo-pictures that too often characterize the newsmagazines. I mean informed analyses like Holden's piece on Arafat, or Michael Reisman's in *The Nation* (Feb. 1), which provided some useful historical and third-world insights despite his unhappy naivete about "global opinion" and U.N. effectiveness in the real world. I mean a picture like the one that emerges from the essay by Moynihan in the *March Commentary*, which helped win him appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. It showed a distinctive if not entirely successful effort to understand third-world ideology and economics, and to take them seriously. It called for fiercer rather than less U.S. participation in the U.N.

Painting such pictures requires a wisdom and experience that most U.N. correspondents don't have. When editors find correspondents who do, they seldom "waste" them on the United Nations. Most newspapers reflect a government bias about the United Nations by giving it a low priority. They also reflect a variety of popular misconceptions. The U.N. has never been a parliament of man, or even as valuable an institution as aging idealists would like to believe. It has never been as dangerous a weapon as revisionist critics charge, or as empty a cave of winds as some columnists claim. It is a limited tool, an imperfect instrument, one small part of a larger system for dealings among nations.

Both those who take the United Nations too seriously and those who do not take it seriously enough know that the organization has little independent existence. It is what the member states want or allow it to be. The U.N. has never forced a sovereign state to stop fighting, for instance, but when states were ready to stop, the U.N. has formalized cease-fires—four times in the Middle East and many more on other battlefields. It will never construct a new economic order, no matter how many poor countries demand one, but it may provide a means that rich and poor can use when both are ready to change the old order. ■

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# Canned Goods From Capitol Hill

BY PHIL TRACY

The video monitor across the studio displays the full face of New York's Senator James L. Buckley. But right now I'm not much concerned with Buckley. Instead, I'm looking at Joel Lind, a young intern from the University of Rochester, who is about to begin his career as a public announcer. Lind is more than a little nervous, although he needn't be, since his voice and the senator's image are being recorded on high quality two-inch color video tape. Errors can be erased. Finally, Lind gets his cue and announces in a deep, professional baritone: "From the Nation's Capitol, 'Senator Buckley Reports'." A "Senator Buckley Reports" logo materializes on the screen as Lind continues: "Today the senator will be interviewed by Mike Waters, of The Associated Press Washington office, and Alan Emory, Washington correspondent for *The Watertown* [N.Y.] *Times*. And now for the first question . . ."

The questions, however, are much less interesting than the studio where they're being asked. Three color cameras. Overhead lighting. A Tele-Prompter on the center camera. The latest stuff. At my left, an imposing bookcase offers volumes on plant disease and the 1957 Yearbook of Agriculture. Across the set there's a phony fireplace. Neither is in use today. This is supposed to be an interview program, so the black curtains and aluminum chairs are out.

Senator Buckley is busy railing against welfare chiselers and food-stamp frauds. "There are college students, some of them with parents who make \$100,000 a year, who are eligible for the food stamp . . ." he tells the cameras. Buckley is on camera about two-thirds of the time. He looks good, too. Graying, neat, smiling—that soft well-bred Connecticut voice hitting hard at all those food-stamp freeloaders with \$100,000 daddies. Lots of people watching this program are going to come away with a pretty good impression of Jim Buckley.

The production manager is signaling two minutes, enough time for one more question. One of the reporters asks about Buckley's law suit challenging the constitutionality of the new election law. To which Buckley replies that everything is going well and the case will be heard somewhere soon. Then the Senator says, "You know, the new law will make it even more difficult to challenge an incumbent. It's not fair. There's an enormous advantage in incumbency after the first or second term."

**F**unny the good Senator should mention that because, for the last 30 minutes or so, Buckley, Joel Lind, the two reporters and half a dozen technicians have been operating in the Senate Recording Studio, a private TV, radio and film production unit owned and operated by the U.S. Senate. (The House of Representatives has its own separate facility.) Moreover, the half-hour interview just taped has been made for the exclusive use of Senator Buckley, at approximately one-tenth the cost of producing the program commercially.

In fairness, Senator Buckley's use of the Senate Recording Studio represents one of the least objectionable in Congress. The "show" was unrehearsed and the two reporters who interviewed him could ask any questions they wanted. Since neither reporter was being paid by Buckley, a practice that New York Senator Jacob Javits engaged in back in the late sixties, the reporters could ask the toughest questions they could think up. That Buckley dominated the program and pretty much said anything he wished was hardly unusual. He is a United States Senator and such politicians regularly get away with murder on the Sunday morning network quiz shows, which are watched primarily by polit-

**If your favorite congressman turns up on TV tonight, don't be surprised if this "news" was filmed in the House or Senate recording studio—at your expense.**

cians, reporters, FCC monitors and other shut-ins. Whatever abuses occurred in the making of the June 23 edition of "Senator Buckley Reports" took place after the show was taped.

The first abuse was the price Senator Buckley paid for his half hour. According to a blank work sheet listing the various studio costs, Buckley was charged \$32 for each 20-minute time block, or \$64 to rent a TV studio with three cameras in order to film the half-hour show. Since Buckley sent prints of the tape to eight TV stations in New York State, he had to pay an additional \$15 for each dupe, or \$120 in all. There was an additional \$40 for two 15-minute time blocks for post-production work, bringing the entire cost of the operation to \$224. The senator did not have to buy the tapes himself because he got them free from the TV stations involved. And he didn't have to pay the postage for sending the tapes through the mail since "Senator Buckley Reports" is considered a "video newsletter," and as such comes under the senator's "franking privilege." According to Dave Garth, the New York-based media advisor to several would-be senators and the current New York governor, the cost of making such a tape in a private TV production studio would run \$2,500, minimum.

A second, far greater abuse was the one perpetrated on the viewing audiences of most of the eight stations to which Buckley sent the tapes. Six of the eight ran the program in the three weeks following its distribution. (Two passed this time, but

admitted they ran "Senator Buckley Reports" occasionally.) All eight confirmed that they never indicated that "Senator Buckley Reports" was prepared and paid for by Senator Buckley. Nor did they report that the program was shot in the Senate Recording Studio, which is subsidized in part by taxpayers' money.\*

In June 1973, the FCC notified all broadcasters that use of legislative "news" spots without identifying them as such could subject stations to fines of up to \$10,000 and forfeiture of licenses. Nevertheless, a small sampling by the Capitol Hill News Service turned up at least four stations that use the spots without the required identification. WGAL-TV in Lancaster, Pa., which boasts "more audience than other area stations combined," regularly broadcasts filmed "news" it receives from Senator Richard Schweiker and Representative William Goodling, both Pennsylvania Republicans, without identifying the source of the materials. For example, WGAL received four film statements from Schweiker in which the second-term Senator discussed the resignation of South Vietnamese President Thieu, an upcoming unemployment rally, reorganization of the Northeast railroads and reimposition of the death penalty. During the same period the station also received short film segments from Goodling on Vietnam, on a local army depot, the tax rebate and a controversy surrounding the Gettysburg National Park which is in his district.

Tom Anderson, a film editor with WGAL, said the station broadcasts everything Goodling sends them. "It relates to issues of concern to the area. He sends nice clean pieces that can be cut to size and he encloses a press release to help us," he said. Another station employee, who asked not to be identified, said the station frequently airs Schweiker's spots. While acknowledging that the station does not identify the source of the films, he said, "It's obvious that they're provided by their offices." Anderson said he was unaware of the FCC rule.

John Williams, news director at WLUC-TV in Marquette, Mich., said he uses about 50 per cent

\*The eight TV stations that receive the Buckley show are WBNG, Binghamton; WGR, Buffalo; WENY, Elmira; WPIX, New York; WYSR, Syracuse; WKTZ, Utica; WUTR, Utica, and WROC, Rochester.



*Phil Tracy is a staff writer for The Village Voice who frequently writes about government.*

20 [MORE]



of the spots sent to him by Representative Phillip Ruppe, and Senator Robert Griffin, both Republicans. The viewer is told only that the spots are "not locally produced." Said Williams: "We always say that the thing was recorded in Washington . . . We don't necessarily credit who in Washington supplied it." Williams said he learned of the FCC rule only a few weeks ago and said he believed identifying the film as coming from Washington satisfied the FCC requirement.

Other stations broadcasting congressional "news" spots with no credits were KOTA in Rapid City, S.D. (Senator George McGovern, Dem.) and WHFV in Fredericksburg, Va. (Representative J. Kenneth Robinson, Rep.). An FCC spokesman acknowledged that the regulatory agency has never fined a station for not identifying the source of congressional material.

One reason the New York stations run Buckley's tapes is that they provide handy filler for holes in the broadcasting time block that would otherwise have to be filled with locally-produced shows. The cost of producing such programs, of course, would be about a hundred times more than the cost of a half-hour video tape. And when the FCC renews licenses, it counts up the number of "public service programs" a station has aired during the three-year license period. "Senator Buckley Reports" neatly falls into this category and is added to the FCC count. Failure to have enough public service programs can, technically, cost a station its license. To the eight New York stations, "Senator Buckley Reports" is a cheap way to fill the FCC requirements.

While the New York State stations may be less than scrupulous about identifying the source of Senator Buckley's half-hour show, at least they run it whole. Senator Russell Long of Louisiana has a weekly, 15-minute interview program complete with local reporters that goes to 15 TV stations back home. According to one of the senator's aides, "We send it [the tape] down to them, and they use it as they wish. Say it's got 30 seconds on Louisiana news. They may take it out and run it in the news show." The Louisiana stations are also kind enough to provide the tapes.

The interview format is a popular one among senators. It looks dignified and objective and senators are considered sufficiently important so that news directors rarely give a second thought to putting their video newsletters on the air. Senators Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, a Democrat, and Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, a

Republican, do a joint appearance once every three weeks. Instead of reporters, Pell and Brooke have administration spokesmen or fellow senators appear on their show and they act as interviewers. The show is aired on Sunday night on WTEV in New Bedford.

**E**ven in rural districts most congressmen don't rate a half-hour TV show. But many of them make it a weekly practice to go down to the taping studio and shoot 30-second or one-minute spots in the form of "comments" on the latest headlines. The really sophisticated ones figure out which votes or veto overrides are coming up the following week and tape their insights in advance. That way the TV news directors back home have the congressman's pearly voice and painted face right there before them on the day the news breaks.

The number of congressmen and senators who admit to sending these canned goods back home ranks slightly behind the number who confess to regularly selling their votes. Of the two dozen offices I called in preparing this piece, not one admitted its man or woman used the studio. Some who are known for their frequent visits denied ever going there. A woman in Senator Tunney's office told me he only used the studio to make public service announcements, such as pitches for the local heart fund drive. If that's the case, there must be a lot of people with bad hearts out in California because on the two occasions I visited the Senate Recording Studio, Senator Tunney was either entering or leaving.

One of the few congressmen who would even admit knowing the whereabouts of the recording studio was Representative Jerry Litton. A Democrat from Missouri, he has a Sunday show once every three weeks that runs on 10 TV and 12 radio stations in Missouri, Kansas and Illinois. Litton tapes his show back in Missouri, using a private film crew and audience. He only uses the House Recording Studio for editing and duplicating the master tape. I asked Litton if he didn't think it was unethical for TV stations to take raw film clips and insert them into news programs without identification. Litton said he didn't see how it was any different than a press release that newspapers use. "But at least the newspapers don't print the press release verbatim," I told him, somewhat naively. Litton smiled and then showed me his scrap book. At the top corner on one page was a photo of Litton and President Ford with a six-line caption explain-

ing why they were shaking hands. Then Litton pointed to the six newspaper clips with the same photo and six-line caption. On the next page was a news release which was made up to look like a news story. Below it was the same news release, printed word for word by five different newspapers. "Oh yeah?" said the congressman from Missouri.

The practice of shooting 30-second comments for the tube back home is, of course, fraught with conflicts of interest. For example, if a legislator sends back canned comments on film, chances are he has worked out something with the TV station so that part or all of his costs are reimbursed by the station. Over the course of a year, then, a local TV station may send its congressman or senator dozens of checks totaling hundreds of dollars. The congressman of course, is the same one who that station is expected to cover with reasonable dispassion come re-election time. Then there is the question of whether sending cheap, high-quality news clips to one station represents a backdoor subsidization of that station by the legislator, perhaps to the detriment of another channel in the same broadcast market. Finally, the practice of running such news clips presents a real danger to the local TV stations themselves. Airing the half-hour interview program Senator Smith sends along each month, without the proper identification, is a technical violation of FCC rules. Inserting a canned news clip from Representative Jones into your nightly news program, without clearly spelling out where it comes from, could cost a station its broadcasting license. Nobody wants to squeal on their friendly local TV station, especially if it might mean a new set of owners who might not be so friendly.

This type of video backscratching goes on every day that Congress is in session. The benefits to both parties are just too tempting. The local news show can pretend it has a correspondent in Washington (usually the back of some congressional aide holding a fake microphone) ready to record the great events of the day for WAMB-Perduka. For the station, such an illusion can add a hint of enterprise to what is essentially a nickel-and-dime operation. In return, the congressman or senator gets to mouth whatever self-serving bullshit comes into his head. Not only that. Since he is appearing on a news program instead of a paid TV commercial, many of the people who automatically screen out the message of most TV commercials will pay attention. And by putting it on the nightly news, the local station lends it own credibility to the congressman's banalities.

At the bottom of the ethical barrel are those congressmen and senators who use the recording studios to make campaign TV commercials. Strictly speaking, this is against the rules of the studios. In the Senate studio, the rule is an unwritten gentleman's agreement, but the man in charge of the studio assured me making campaign commercials was forbidden. The House Recording Studio rules specifically say that the facilities are to be used exclusively for communicating information to a sitting member's constituents. However, a survey by *The Christian Science Monitor*, based on the bi-annual report of the Secretary of the Senate, showed that in October of 1972 there was a sudden, mad rush by our senators to communicate with the people who elected them. In the last half of October, the Senate Recording Studio provided \$27,848 worth of services to these senators, triple the \$9,643 for the first half of the month and about eight times the monthly norm of \$3,000 to \$4,000 throughout the earlier part of the year.

In 1968, Ted Kennedy made a series of campaign plugs, endorsing Democratic hopefuls around the country, rather than make personal appearances so soon after his brother Robert's death. He taped some 30 endorsements in the Senate Recording Studio. When questioned by a reporter, a Kennedy aide explained at the time "It's very cheap, you know." Asked if he didn't think there was anything unethical about making campaign plugs in a government-operated studio, the aide replied, "No one said anything about not doing

(continued on page 23)

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Sandy Huffaker



# Furthermore

(continued from page 27)

scooped them on an important story. (Clive Barnes of the *Times* reviews previews on occasion and nobody complains that he hasn't waited until the play is ready for the public.) Where Kael may have been remiss is in writing about a friend's film, but anyone who reads her regularly must know she is a passionate champion of Altman. She's declared her interest. More to the point, Kael has managed, with her very personal style of criticism, to communicate to her readers why she likes Altman (and

his films); we have the sense that the judgment of the films came first and that the friendship somehow depends on them, not vice versa.

Any critic who has been around for a while has built up a number of these relationships. Any critic except John Simon, that is. Other reviewers may be quietly corrupted by social relationships with filmmakers; Simon isn't. He stands implacably apart, separated from the objects of his scrutiny by the Standards which he adamantly defends against their onslaughts. Since he first started to

build a career as a critic writing for *Hudson Review* and *The New Leader* in the early nineteen sixties, Simon has assiduously constructed an image for himself as a rigorous, uncompromising and punctilious judge of cinema. Simon's special image, and the career he has built on it, raises a third area of critical improbity, more subtle than either money or "simple human contact" but possibly more pernicious. This is the phenomenon of the Critic as Celebrity—what we might call the Alexander Woollcott syndrome.

No one to my knowledge has yet put the John Simon character on stage (as both Edna Ferber and Kaufman and Hart did Woollcott's arrogant, witty persona), but it's only a matter of time. At best, the critic as celebrity has the advantage of making clear his own relationship with the work of art he is professing to judge. We always know where Simon is coming from, for example, and we're likely to understand that much of his censure is done for the sheer pleasure of it rather than because the subject deserves it. But at the worst we are presented with the spectacle of a Rex Reed, who established himself quickly in the late sixties by latching on to the star personalities he bitchily interviewed, and who enjoys acting in films like *Myra Breckinridge* and posing for liquor ads: the critic as vaudeville entertainer, in other words.

**Y**et even when the celebrity critic avoids this kind of blatant self-aggrandizement, there are dangers. A critic like Simon becomes so intimately involved with the character he has set up to play that very often he is overpowered by it: co-opted not by money and favors, not by simple human contact with his subjects, but by his own exaggerated image. There are some strong hints that this is what happened to Simon in Wilfred Sheed's comic novel about critics, *Max Jamison*, whose eponymous hero was at least partly modeled on John Simon. Simon himself seems aware of this. In discussing the long hard pull working at little magazines which finally led to his position as *New York's* theatre critic in '68, *Esquire's* film critic in '73, and his most recent new post, he spoke about "tenacity" and the absolute necessity to "create an image as a critic." In only his second film column for *New York*, he found himself blocked by that image. In the disconcerting position of wanting to say something positive about Burt Reynolds' new film *W. W. and the Dixie Dancekings*, he discovered it was necessary to preface his praise with a long paragraph of apology, then to bury his approbation in a dependent clause smothered in qualifiers.

Sometimes the burdens of stardom hang heavy. His criticism aside, John Simon's career has always seemed to me to be one of the few authentic works of art of the sixties and seventies. He has done in criticism what Mailer has done in the novel and Warhol in painting: shifted the focus of interest from the work to the artist. That may not be pleasant for people whose own works of art are used up in the process, but it says a lot about our age of celebrity in which public lives have a validity that private lives don't. The greatest pressure confronting a critic—indeed, any writer—is not from producers, directors or actors as Andrew Sarris points out, but from "readers and editors. That's where you feel the heat"—the pressure both to conform and perform, but never to inform.

One reader wrote in to *New York* that "replacing... Judith Crist with John Simon is like firing Pollyanna and hiring Martin Bormann." So long as Polly and the Nazi are good copy, magazines will publish them. In the end, the problem is really the reader's. Crist, Simon and the rest often write the way they do because of pressures so subtle they may not even be aware of them; moreover, these influences are frequently unavoidable. So long as they do not declare their interests, it's the reader's job (and pleasure) to puzzle them out. As Pauline Kael is fond of saying, "It's only a movie."

## Please Post.



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# Canned Goods From Capitol Hill

(continued from page 21)

political plugs in the studio. If there was anything wrong, why didn't they stop us after the first one?"

Last year Senator George McGovern used the studio to tape a five-minute spot announcing he was going to seek re-election. McGovern then bought time on local stations back in South Dakota and ran the spot as a commercial. And earlier this year, Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson used the facilities to help announce his candidacy for the Presidency next year. Jackson made a video announcement at Wolper Productions, a private studio in Los Angeles. He then brought the master back to Washington and made duplicates of the audio portion for distribution to radio stations around the country. When asked if they didn't know they were violating the so-called rules of the Senate Recording Studio, spokesmen for both McGovern and Jackson said they didn't know about the prohibition on campaign material. McGovern's spokesmen said, "We didn't think there was anything wrong with it because we paid for the studio time."

**A** good deal of the confusion surrounding the legitimate uses of the House and Senate recording studios stems from the way they are set up. Technically, they are independent operations created by the respective branch of Congress for the convenience of sitting members. In reality, the government underwrites a substantial portion of the studios' costs through hidden subsidies. While Charles Jones, administrator of the Senate Recording Studio, says "We've never gotten a dime from the appropriations committee," he is leaving out the fact that all the salaries of the recording studio

are buried in the Office of the Secretary of the Senate. Salaries totalling some \$300,000 a year. The salaries for the 20 employees of the House Recording Studio appear in the budget of the Clerk of the House. Nor does either operation pay rent for the government space it uses, or for the renovations that were necessary to make that space functional. I don't know whether they pay their own telephone and electricity bills, but my suspicion is they don't. So when Jones says that the fees charged the senators cover all the expenses of the studio, what he is really talking about is depreciation on the equipment in the studio. The same holds true for the House facility. Everything else is on the taxpayers.

It follows that because the recording studios are financed by the government in such a hidden manner, specific details concerning how they operate and who they serve are hard to come by. I discovered this rather early on in the course of researching this story when I made 13 phone calls to Charles Jones. He failed to return all but one of them. I never did get to speak to him on the telephone and eventually had to go sit in his office for an hour before I got an appointment. When we finally got together face to face, Jones proved a dry well. Among the many things he said he was not at

liberty to disclose were the budget of the studio, who used it and whether the staff was unionized. I asked Jones, "How much do you charge for video tapes?" He answered, "I don't give out that information. Someone else may be willing to tell you, but my policy is not to divulge the prices we charge here." I asked him why. "It's just our policy. We're a private operation. We don't have to."

As it turned out, Jones was a regular blabbermouth compared to the people who run the House Recording Studio. There I spoke with a Mr. Moody, who referred me to a Mr. Harnett, who told me to speak to Representative Thomas Rees, chairman of a special three-man House committee that oversees the studio. "We like to get one story," Harnett explained. Representative Rees conceded that "it is sometimes difficult to draw a fine line between campaign activities and fulfilling the duties of your office." But he, too, would tell me nothing—except that I couldn't take a tour of the studio. He said that last year, "a reporter went there and disrupted the whole set-up." Studio employees, Rees explained, were "afraid of people running through the studio disrupting the pattern of work." Finally, Rees got to the real reason I couldn't take the tour. "A member was upset about being confronted in the studio by a reporter." ■

## New York

(continued from page 8)

the *News*, a paper with a "conservative" political tradition, to call attention to a catastrophe occasioned by unrestrained spending and borrowing. But this is precisely the point: Wiser heads, in the nation's capital and the nation's cities have begun to discard the old labels and the automatic reactions they suggested. An accredited Democratic liberal like William Proxmire shares Barry Goldwater's concern about containing Federal spending; they would cut different items, to be sure, but they both would cut, and there is the beginning of a consensus here. Similarly, those who have watched the anguish of New York must surely conclude that there is nothing enduringly "liberal" about perennially fattening an urban bureaucracy, systematically destroying a great city's credit and accelerating the flight of middle-class taxpayers. The role of wisdom on the part of editorialists clearly should have been to clarify realities rather than to fortify prejudices, to pound home the simple message of overdue change rather than to seek scapegoats downtown, upstate or on the Potomac—and not to get lost on a merry-go-round of vacillation.

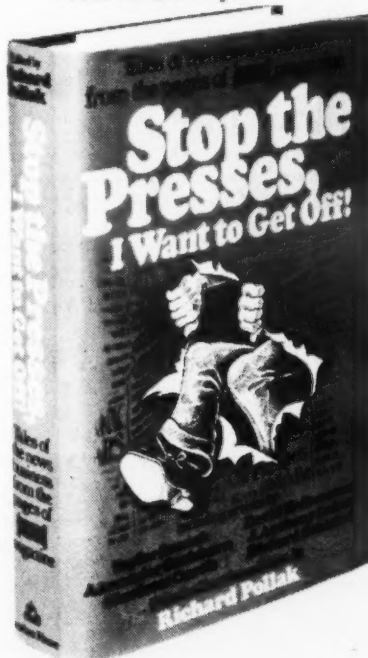
New Yorkers are understandably disheartened by their current situation: The patronizers don't like to be patronized. It was characteristic of the city that its leaders' first reaction, on realizing that their extravagance had become insupportable, was not to seek cuts but to seek someone else to foot the bill. (Was it really the fault of the rest of the country that New York had pegged its benefit program at so high a level that it attracted more customers than it could handle?) It is understandable, too, that the city administration was less than ecstatic in August when President Ford mocked its spending habits, before, of all people, the Belgrade City Council. But when all the resentment is over, and the last ramification of New York's flirtation with bankruptcy has rippled through Fairbanks, Alaska, America's greatest city will be left with the reality that it brought its troubles on itself, that it worsened these troubles by repeatedly coming up with too little too late—and that its newspapers' editorial pages too often were a part of the problem and not the solution. ■

# Stop the Presses, I Want to Get Off!

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# THE BIG APPLE

DAILY NEWS

WABC NEWSRADIO 88

WABC NEWSRADIO 88

NEW YORKER

7



Gay Talese

## PEN Pals

PEN stands for an international association of poets, playwrights, essayists, editors, and novelists. The group's goal is "to promote international understanding and cooperation among writers." But recently, PEN found it tough to cooperate when choosing a new president for its American Center. The nominating committee, and then President Jerzy Kosinski chose Gay Talese for the job. But for the first time in the center's history an insurgent candidate, poet Muriel Rukeyser, was nominated, prompting Talese to withdraw.

Usually, it's hard enough to find one candidate for the job, according to Kosinski. Few members are willing to devote the time and energy that he said the job requires. According to Martin Tucker, a member of the nominating committee, a number of other potential nominees had turned down the post before they tried Talese.

At first, Talese turned them down as well. But Talese had been concerned with encouraging liberal journalists, including PEN members, to pay more attention to the problems of American writers and authors who have been "harassed, arrested, sometimes convicted" if their writing dealt with sex. PEN tends to concentrate on purely "political" causes or the plight of writers abroad. "If Ralph Ginsburg was a Russian, [PEN] would have been up in arms when he went to jail," Talese says. Talese, author of the upcoming and much-publicized *Sex in America*, hoped to use the presidency to change PEN's focus. He agreed to run.

The opposition to Talese was lead by *New Yorker* writer Donald Barthelme and *American Review* editor Theodore Solotaroff. Solotaroff would only say that Rukeyser is "someone whose career has been identified with the cause PEN has fought for," and that nominating an independent candidate was "an at-



Muriel Rukeyser

tempt to open up the atmosphere" at PEN.

Other PEN members suspect that there might be more to it, though they emphasize that they are "only guessing." "It may have been the fine arts against journalism," says Kurt Vonnegut, who supported Talese but "does not oppose" Rukeyser. "I'd guess that to them Muriel seemed like a far more literary person." Another member, who asked that his name not be used, was more direct. "It may have been cultural snobbery," he said. "If [Talese] wasn't writing a sex book and he hadn't written a Mafia book [*Honor Thy Father*], there'd be no problem."

Kosinski said that perhaps some of Talese's opponents feared that his authorship of *Sex in America* might scare off potential contributors. "After I was elected, I hear some people had opposed me because of my foreign accent," Kosinski said.

—RICHARD WEXLER

## Chase Has A Friend

Each week the *Village Voice* features a political cartoon with accompanying commentary by talented artist Edward Sorel. Scheduled for the July 28 *Voice* was Sorel's drawing of Federal Reserve Bank chairman Arthur Burns, with a barb directed at Burns' refusal to make public the range of interest rates charged by San Francisco banks. The cartoon was headed CHASE HAS A FRIEND AT THE FEDERAL RESERVE.

Chase also has a friend at the *Village Voice*. Chase Manhattan Bank had run a double-page advertisement in the July 21 *Voice* and planned to do so again in the July 28 edition. The connection between Sorel's cartoon and Chase—limited to the headline—was tenuous at best. But managing editor Judith Daniels decided the drawing should not appear in the same issue with the Chase ad. Since several Sorel drawings are usually on file at the *Voice*, another was called into service. The July 28 cartoon concerned rumors that Mayor Beame was going to proclaim an S & M Day in New York City.

The Chase cartoon did not run the following week either — but two pages of Chase ads did. Readers finally saw the offending drawing in the August 11 issue, which contained no ads for Chase Manhattan.

*Voice* owner and editor-in-chief Clay Felker was apparently unaware of the decision and was reportedly surprised to hear the cartoon had been delayed. Sorel, who has appeared regularly in the *Voice* for one year, says he was unaware of the postponement, but that "if true, it's

shameful." Until now, Sorel said, the *Voice's* attitude toward his editorial point of view has been "anything goes." —C.C.

## More Than Meets The Eye

The country's largest broadcasting empire is the subject of a new book called *CBS: Reflections in a Blood-shot Eye*. The book's punches are few and its portrait of board chairman William S. Paley not at all unflattering. But officials at CBS have sounded the alarms.

In a five-page single-space memorandum sent to book reviewers, E. K. "Kidder" Meade, Jr., CBS vice president of corporate affairs, lists 37 alleged errors in the book, mostly involving Paley. Meade calls these "the more conspicuous errors and inaccuracies." Meade also sent an intra-office memo to all CBS employees saying the book is "riddled with errors. We intend to ignore this book. If we receive inquiries about it, we will reply that the book is so full of errors it is not worthy of comment."

"The book is trash and Paley agrees with me," Meade told [MORE], breaking his own rule by commenting on the book. "It's nothing but gossip and if Playboy Press [the publisher] has any standards, they will correct the errors I stated."

And indeed, when the current edition runs out, Playboy Press will issue a second printing—with approximately 15 corrections.

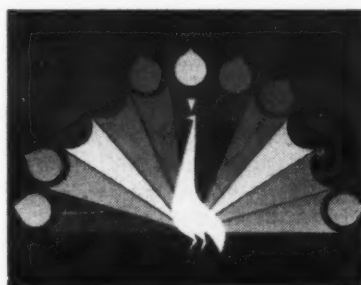
"Let's not call all of them corrections," says Robert Metz, the book's author and financial reporter for *The New York Times*. "Some of them will just be clarifications." For example, in the first edition, Paley is called a "Russian Jew." "Not true," says Meade. "Paley is a native American, born in Chicago on September 28, 1901." Metz says the correction will read that Paley is of Russian descent.

In several cases, Metz will stand by his original statements, but preface them with, "Mr. Paley denies it but..." One alleged error that will receive such treatment is the account of Paley taking a manservant with him on weekend trips to friends.

Metz also reported that J. Edgar Hoover told Paley over lunch that CBS stood for the Communist Broadcasting Company. "Not true," says Meade. "Mr. Paley never met J. Edgar Hoover, let alone have lunch with him." Metz says the story is true, but he concedes that the remark may not have been made over lunch—so that point will be corrected.

One account Meade questioned that will not be corrected is a story that Paley delayed the opening of The Ground Floor restaurant in the CBS building while he studied curtain lengths and colors.

"I could have a libel suit against Meade if I wanted to, with him call-



## Bird Caged

One certainty in life is that all things familiar will eventually change or disappear. Such is the fate of the NBC peacock. The brilliant plumage of the bird which unfolded regularly for 19 years will soon be relegated to the corporate trademark limbo now inhabited by Little Nipper, listening for "His Master's Voice"—the symbol of NBC's parent company RCA.

Once the herald of impending colorcasts in the days when such things were novelties, today the peacock appears only before the *Today* show, the start of the afternoon programming, and several sports events. The peacock—known in NBC circles as "the bird"—has fallen victim to the omnipresence of color programming and color television set ownership. "In January we will have a different graphics look, and the peacock is not part of our plans," says Gerald Rowe, an NBC vice president. "But it's a shame to see it go. Perhaps we'll resurrect it for special events." —N.S.

New York

11

1010 WINS

New York Post

9

Amsterdam News

WNBC-TV 4

VOICE

WNEW-TV 5

VARIETY

13

The New York Times

2



# THE BIG APPLE

DAILY NEWS

WIND

WCBS NEWSRAD

NEW YORKER

7

ing the book trash and everything," says Metz. "I checked the book with many people at CBS and they said it was okay. But Paley scares people." One scared person, says Metz, is New York City Councilman Carter Burden, Paley's former son-in-law, who provided much "valuable information" and is quoted extensively in the book. After hearing Paley was upset with the book, Metz says, Burden denied speaking with him. A spokeswoman for Burden said, however, that the councilman never denied speaking to Metz.

Metz's book figures to attract fairly wide attention—if not from book reviewers then from press observers. But while some book critics indicate they may mention Meade's memo in their reviews, none seem particularly impressed by it. The prevailing attitude was probably best summarized by Harry Waters, writing in the August 11 media section of *Newsweek*: "The bulk of Meade's objections... are picayune enough to suggest that it doesn't take much to irritate the CBS 'eye'."

—KEVIN L. GOLDMAN



CBS book by Robert Metz

## But Will It Play In Peoria?

In New York City, cable television franchises are operated by two companies, Teleprompter and Manhattan Cable. Each company operates two public access channels, where they are required to air any material submitted. Under overlapping and often conflicting local, state and federal regulations, cable tv systems may not censor public access programming—but at the same time they must not run material that their company's legal department determines is in probable violation of the local obscenity laws.

For the last nine months, a regular feature on New York's public access channels has been *Midnight Blue*, a program dealing in sexually explicit, albeit soft-core, material. Backed by *Screw* magazine, *Midnight Blue* has included features on stripteasers and sex on Fire Island. Occasionally the cable companies have requested fur-



Alex Bennett video tapes Marilyn Chambers for *Midnight Blue*.

Bruce David

ther editing from the show's producers to stay within the bounds of legal obscenity, and the producers have complied.

In June, Manhattan Cable ran a *Midnight Blue* segment called *Swingers: Keeping It Up With the Joneses*, a 28-minute documentary about a group that has rented Catskill hotels for purposes of group sex. A three-minute orgy scene was included. Teleprompter ruled the show "obscene" and refused to run it. However, *Midnight Blue's* producers, Alex Bennett and Bruce David, felt Teleprompter's objection had nothing to do with obscenity. They charged Teleprompter with censoring public access programming for business reasons and asked the local Bureau of Franchising to investigate. Such interference with public access is counter to the company's charter and could result in revocation of the company's franchise.

The implication of the charges was that Teleprompter, which is a national corporation, was worried that a reputation as a purveyor of pornography would not facilitate acquisition of franchises in small towns across the country. Such sales are critical. Never successful in urban centers like Manhattan, cable has only become profitable in the semi-rural areas. And as Teleprompter program director Joel Willis notes, "When you try to get a fran-

chise in a small town in Iowa, they look at what you've done in New York." Teleprompter president Joseph Taylor maintains, however, that his interest is in avoiding criminal liability, not enhancing corporate image. (Manhattan Cable has, in part, probably been more willing to run *Midnight Blue* because it has only the one local franchise.)

Supported by *Screw's* parent company, Milky Way Productions, Bennett and David intended to press the suit and try to resolve some of the conflicting cable regulations. Teleprompter was equally anxious for the test. "It was a perfect match and would have solved everybody's problems," said Willis. But Milky Way's lawyers never got to file their briefs. A technician in Teleprompter's control room mistakenly put the show on the air. Said *Screw* editor Al Goldstein, "On a confrontation front, (the issue) seems to have blurred."

But Teleprompter soon found another *Midnight Blue* segment a bit too blue. A taped interview with Marilyn Chambers was deemed objectionable because of a striptease segment. David pointed out that other shows had been aired containing material that could be considered much more "obscene." But this time, Don Jackson, in charge of public access at Teleprompter, told Bruce David that "network stan-

dards" were presently being adhered to at Teleprompter. Consequently, he said, Chambers' total frontal nudity was unacceptable for air play.

That afternoon, Taylor received a phone call from Jean Valley from *Time*, who was preparing a piece on *Midnight Blue* and its problems with Teleprompter. According to Valley, Taylor said the company "did not want to veer too far from network standards." Later on the same day, Bruce David received a message on his telephone answering machine from Don Jackson; the gist was that "network standards" were no longer applicable and the Chambers tape would run. The message also said that Teleprompter's new criteria for sexually explicit material would be "R" movie rating standards.

Why the sudden switch? Taylor denies making any statements about "network standards." And Jackson says the switch was several weeks in the making. But it seems possible that Taylor realized that if *Time* printed his comments about "network standards," Teleprompter's franchise from the city could be in jeopardy. No standards short of legal obscenity may be applied by a company in cutting public access programming.

At present, an uneasy truce exists between *Midnight Blue* and Teleprompter, but clearly the show's producers stand ready to take advantage of the next opportunity for litigation. According to Leonard G. Cohen of the Office of Telecommunications of the city's Bureau of Franchising, a legal decision concerning obscenity on public access that would remove criminal liability from the cable companies and place it on the producers would go far toward providing a resolution to some of cable's problems.

—R.B. GORLIN

## Where's Oscar?

His first week on the job, editor Keith Kalland forgot what publisher Craig Lekutis said was worthy of capital punishment—don't forget Oscar.

Oscar Observer was the cartooned newsboy hidden in a different ad each week in the *Oakland* (N.J.) *Observer*. Readers won \$10 and dinner for two at the Famous Kitchen if they correctly identified Oscar's whereabouts. Contestants, who received phone calls from the paper, were chosen from the paper's 3,900 subscribers. The promotion—Lekutis' brainchild—had run without a hitch for 78 weeks.

Kalland, 25, put out his first issue May 15, leaving "the popular nymph" on the composing desk. Readers phoned the editorial office asking "where's Oscar," and Lekutis was described as "sinking his head into his folded arms." A front-page story headlined "The Night Oscar Died" appeared the following week. Kalland confessed his error, kept his job and the pot was increased to \$20.

—MICHAEL ANTONOFF

## Stop the Presses!

210

ADVISORY 7-18

EDITORS:

THE SPINOFF FROM THE APOLLO-SOYUZ INTERNATIONAL SPACEFLIGHT IS MORE THAN THE OBVIOUS DETENTE BETWEEN TWO OF THE MOST POWERFUL NATIONS ON EARTH. THERE IS THE CULTURAL ASPECT OF KNOWING YOUR NEIGHBOR, NOT SIMPLY BY LEARNING HIS LANGUAGE, BUT BY EATING HIS FOOD TOO.

HENRY SHAPIRO, UPI MOSCOW BUREAU CHIEF FOR 36 YEARS AND NOW A VISITING PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, EXPLODES THE MYTH THAT BORSCHT IS RUSSIA'S NATIONAL SOUP IN A SPECIAL 600-WORD DISPATCH (BORSCHT) THAT WILL MOVE FROM THE HOUSTON SPACE CENTER FOR SATURDAY MORNING NEWSPAPERS.

UPI SPACEFLIGHT

UPI 07-18 05:45 PED

New York

1010 WINS

New York Post

9

Amsterdam News

WNBC-TV 4

VOICE

WNEW-TV 5

VARIETY

13

The New York Times

02



## Local Ham

(Continued from page 12)

Ford's to make the *Press*. There's the story about the high school girl who wrote the President to tell him they both celebrated the same birthday. Ford's reply was three months late, but the story rated four paragraphs. Another local, a maker of hooked wall rugs, commanded a three-column picture and story for his tufted representation of the bicentennial symbol for presentation to the President "on Ford's next visit to Grand Rapids," which is as yet unscheduled.

Woodcarvers are sure-fire material in the one-time "furniture city" and always rate a picture. A local artisan knocked out a replica of the presidential seal in wood, 2½ feet in diameter. An inquiring *Press* reporter wondered whether "the knowledge of this seal's well-known recipient steadied the carver's hand. 'Not really,' he replied. 'In a couple of places, I nicked the wood and had to spend some time fixing it up.'" The Kent (County) Optimist Club apparently wasn't paying attention. Several months later, it commissioned another artist to carve a replica of the Optimist seal in wood. According to the artist, "The main thing is that the Optimists wanted to give President Ford something that was a little bit out of the ordinary."

Large groups haven't been ignored by the *Press*, either. They include the students who constructed a three-by-six-foot get-well card for Betty Ford, the 1,000-member church congregation that "confirmed the President in prayer," 400 high school students who met the President on a spring White House tour and even the patrons of the Grand Rapids Art Museum: "A group of visitors from President Ford's home town discovered last weekend that 'Grand Rapids' is a magic word in Washington these days. . . . Stopping in the private garden outside the Oval Office for a view of the April flowers in full bloom, they were greeted through opened windows by Betty Ford, who was presented an honorary life membership from the GR Art Museum."

I asked *Press* managing editor David Osborne whether this type of story had been overdone. He said, "We try to avoid hooking a marginal story to Ford. We make quite an effort not to make an effort. We don't think we're as naive as they think, and we don't want to be naive enough to bend over backwards to prove it."

Osborne must have missed the story headline FORD GETS LOCAL HAM. Yes, Virginia, a genuine "VandenBrink sweet-smoked boneless ham." Delivering the ham proved to be something of a problem, according to the reporter, "Since the Fords will be in Vail, Colo., for the holidays, it couldn't be determined if the ham would be a pre-Christmas dinner entree at the White House, or a ham dinner Christmas Day in Vail."

Such are the problems when local folk try to keep in touch with the President of the United States. But if you *are* willing to try, the evidence is the *Press* will be there to report it. Last fall, when Ford made his first trip back to Grand Rapids as president, a *Press* reporter went out to get local reaction. He came back with a story headlined, SOME FOLKS DIDN'T KNOW FORD WAS COMING HOME.

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## One Hand Washes The Other

By JAMES MONACO

Late in June, *New York Magazine* editor Clay Felker called Judith Crist into his office and suggested she extend her annual vacation from *New York* indefinitely. Crist had been the magazine's film critic since its inception in 1968, but there had been talk lately—of too many glowing reviews, and why many of her notices read like press agents' dreams. Besides, *New York* had had a poor first quarter; maybe some staff changes would help revive its failing hip image. Felker had decided to replace Crist's workmanlike reporting with John Simon's splenetic lucubrations, apparently betting that more readers would be attracted by Simon's reputation as the bad boy of criticism than would be scared off by his logomachic paralogisms. Crist, whose own career as a movie critic had started 12 years ago with a string of well-timed acerbic put-downs and who, for several years thereafter, had a reputation as a "tough, no-nonsense" reviewer, understood this attitude. "You'll note," she had written in 1968, "that it is our negativism and not our positive raptures that win us public notice."

But it is precisely these "positive raptures" of Crist and other critics—that have become the subject of much recent "public notice." A few weeks previous to Crist's firing, Francis Ford Coppola, in a *Playboy* interview, had raised a teapot tempest of controversy by charging unnamed film critics with "extortion and blackmail." Coppola had made a few perfunctory remarks about reviewers with screenplays to sell on the side. Whom did he mean? Penelope Gilliatt of *The New Yorker*? Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun Times*? Both have written films that were produced, but the circumstances surrounding their scripts are well-known and there hasn't been a hint of conflict-of-interest. Vincent Canby of *The New York Times*, who has a novel just out? Not likely. What could producers trade him for a good review—only the assurances of a reading, which as thousands of novelists will attest, usually leads nowhere. Paul Zimmerman (*Newsweek*) or Stefan Kanfer (formerly of *Time*)? They've tried their hand at screenplays but with little success so far. Maybe Jay Cocks (*Time*). A few years ago Cocks wrote a potential episode of *Columbo* with Brian De Palma. But (a) he'd used a pseudonym, (b) the episode was never filmed and (c) *Columbo* is a TV program and Cocks criticizes movies. There was even some talk about Cocks giving poor notices to actresses who played roles his wife, Verna Bloom, had tried out for, but there is no evidence for these claims.

That leaves Hollis Alpert, until recently of *The Saturday Review*. Alpert wrote two scripts while under contract to Joe Levine at Avco-Embassy. Maybe Alpert reviewed Joe Levine's films while he was under contract. But that would leave us with the absurd spectacle of Levine shelling out scores of thousands of dollars just to ensure favorable reviews of his films in—of all places—*Saturday Review*!

No, the script-peddling theory won't wash. Any-

James Monaco is the author of *The New Wave: Godard, Truffaut, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette, to be published this winter by Oxford University Press.*

way, the phrase Coppola used in his interview was strange. He charged nameless critics with making filmmakers "participate in certain things that accrue to the critic's advantage." Coppola refused to elaborate.

Nevertheless, that sure sounds like Judith Crist's "Film Weekends." Ten times a year she invites filmmakers to spend a weekend at the Tarrytown (N.Y.) Conference Center with her and 188 ardent fans who each pay \$110 for a chance to listen and rub elbows. That's a gross of \$200,000 a year; Crist's percentage might be substantial. Could this be the movie's own payola? In a good year—and there have been several lately—Judith Crist makes \$100,000 writing and talking about movies. Add up the credits: the weekly column in *TV Guide* (now in its tenth year), the classes in film criticism at Columbia's School of Journalism, the college lecture circuit, the glamorous sold-out "film weekends" and, until recently, the column in *New York* (her main base and occasionally syndicated). For ten years, until she was let go in 1973, there had also been a position with the *Today* show. And the contract she just signed with *Saturday Review* guarantees her more per column than she received at *New York*. A one-woman critical factory. Measured in cold cash (or readership, for



that matter), Crist is easily the most successful movie critic ever.

Whether or not cash was involved, as Coppola seemed to suggest, the film weekends appear to be a perfect opportunity for trade-offs. A quick check of Crist's recent reviews and her guest list at Tarrytown revealed what looked like an incriminating collation: all the guest's movies had been treated with kid gloves, and nearly all the reviews were positively dithyrambic. Former guest Robert Altman's *Nashville* was "a brilliant and incomparable masterwork." Frequent guests Warren Beatty and Mike Nichols's *The Fortune*, "a glittery concoction, its cachet as glamorous as its execution is talented and its aspirations adventurous." Guest John Schlesinger's *Day of the Locust* she found "so brilliant, so dazzling and harrowing its impact, so impotent the superlatives it evokes" that she was left wordless.

But what does this really prove? First, these weren't the only positive reviews Crist wrote during the period. Coppola himself, who had bowed out of a weekend last November, nevertheless found two of his films on her ten-best list in December. Second, Crist wasn't alone in praising

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these films. All we really know is that—like just about every other critic—Crist has her favorites. Unlike other critics, she invites them to Tarrytown.

TV critics who give certain films favorable reviews on the eleven o'clock news and eight or nine hours later interview the filmmakers on their morning talk shows are equally guilty. As are reviewers who enjoy studio junkets and second-stringers who do celebrity profiles to make a few extra bucks. It looks like Coppola made charges he can't substantiate. There simply isn't enough money involved to make a difference. The payoff is too remote; no single film critic can make or break a movie like a well-placed disk jockey can assure the success of a record.

Co-optation in film criticism—as in most other areas of journalism—is much more subtle than, if just as effective as, the crude bribe. *Village Voice* critic Andrew Sarris puts it succinctly: it isn't the favors and junkets that really count, not lunches at the Plaza and weekends in Tarrytown; "simple human contact is much more corrupting in the long run." A critic who knows a filmmaker, who's met the wife and kids, who's been privy to the inside gossip and heard sad stories of troubles on the set, is going to look at a film with kindness no matter how objective he tries to be. Producers know this and exploit it. Warren Beatty recently did a fine job selling his film *Shampoo* this way, spreading around the charm with measurable effect. No monetary quid pro quo, just a broad smile and a nice lunch. Crist's film weekends—which, by the way, netted her only 15 per cent of her substantial income—were just a logical extension of this "simple human contact." She asks filmmakers like Beatty, Nichols, Altman and Schlesinger because she likes them, and they probably come because they like her—and they know she likes them. One hand washes the other. Not quite kosher, but a fact of life.

Every journalist has to contend with this—dinner at the Kissingers, a better seat on the press bus—the little seductions of everyday life. You're either inside or you're out, and if you're inside you've got a stake in the status quo, however small. What really counts, so far as journalistic ethics are concerned, is not avoiding all human contact with your subjects, but declaring your interest. As Jay Cocks puts it, all these little corruptions would be a lot less damaging if critics learned how to speak in their own voices; if, where appropriate, they began reviews by explaining their relationship with the filmmakers: "My friend Robert Altman has made a film. . . ."

Pauline Kael, for example, considers Altman a friend. Last winter he invited her (among others, including Judith Crist) to an intimate screening of a rough cut of his latest work—just a few close friends, the handful of critics outnumbered by the kind of group that applauds each credit. It's a trick that has been used at least since Orson Welles presold *Citizen Kane* this way. This time it worked. Kael's prerelease rave for *Nashville* generated invaluable reams of secondary publicity. She was denounced by her colleagues for jumping release date, but that's not the point. She simply

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